



SEVENTEEN

SERMONS

UPON

SEVERAL SUBJECTS.



A

THE

SEVENTEEN

SERMONS



SEVERAL SUBJECTS

THE

SEVENTEEN
SERMONS

UPON

Several Subjects.

By *WALTER JONES*, D. D.
And Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.



L O N D O N :

Printed by J. WATTS for the
AUTHOR'S WIDOW:
And Sold by J. BROTHERTON at the
Bible in Cornhill.

M DCC XLI.

SEVENTEEN

SERMONS

UPON

Several Subjects



By WATT
And Chaplain

LONDON

Printed by J. Watts, in the

AUTHOR'S WIDOW

And sold by J. Richardson at the

Book in Common

M.C.XII



To the Right Reverend Father in God,

M A R T I N

Lord Bishop of G L O C E T E R.

My L O R D,



THE Reason of my
presenting these
Sermons of my
Dear Husband to
Your Lordship, is the Expe-
rience I have had that their
being *his Remains* is suffi-
cient to recommend them to
Your Lordship's Patronage.
To

DEDICATION.

To speak of the *Greatness* of Your Lordship's *publick*, or the *Amiableness* of your *private* Character, would be as *unbecoming* me, as it would be *disagreeable* to Your Lordship.

I shall therefore take this Opportunity of acquainting the Publick, that the Author of these Sermons was favoured with Your Lordship's Friendship, (which is alone sufficient to recommend his Memory:) and of assuring Your Lordship that he himself always esteemed it his Happiness and his Honour.

I need

DEDICATION.

I need not acquaint Your Lordship, but it may be proper to inform the Publick, that these Sermons were not designed for the Press, and that they are printed without any Variation from the Author's Copies.

Your Lordship's pardoning this Address will add to the many other Obligations conferred on

Your LORDSHIP'S

most obedient humble Servant,

JUDITH JONES.

DEDICATION

I need not acquaint Your
Lordship, but it may be pro-
per to inform the Publick
that these Sermons were
not designed for the Press,
and that they are printed
without any Variation from
the Author's Copies.
Your Lordship's pardon-
ing this Address will add to
the many other Obligations
confer'd on

1697 5

John I. o. r. s. n. 1. 1. 1.

with obedient humble Service

John I. o. r. s. n. 1. 1. 1.

See over 8 lines
SUBSCRIBERS NAMES.

Emund Lambert, *Esq;*
Edward Lambert, *Esq;*
Reverend Mr. Benjamin Lane.
Reverend Mr. Charles Lane.
Mrs. Ann Lane.
Bennet Langton, *Esq;*
Mr. Laskey.
Henry Lafter, *Esq;*
Littleton Lawrence, *Esq;*
Edmund Lechmere, *Esq;*
Richard Lechmere, *Esq;*
Mrs. Lechmere.
Reverend Dr. Leigh, R. P.
Mr. Le Merchant.
Reverend Mr. Le Hunt.
Reverend Mr. Philip Lewis.
Reverend Mr. Henry Leybourne.
Mrs. Libbe.
Reverend Mr. Lloyd, two Copies, R. P.
Mrs. Ann Lloyd.
Mr. Thomas Lloyd, R. P.
Reverend Mr. Lockton.
Mrs. Lovelace.
Mr. Lovibond.
Humphry Lowe, *Esq;*
Mrs. Lowe.
Miss Lowe.
Reverend Mr. John Lowth.
Mrs. Lugg.
Reverend Mr. Lye.
Mrs. Sarah Lye.
Mr. Nath. Lye, R. P.

A LIST of the

Reginald Lygon, *Esq*; five Copies, R. P.
Miss Lygon, R. P.
Reverend Dr. Lynch.

M.

Right Honourable Lord James Manners, R. P.
Honourable Bussy Mansell, *Esq*;
Mr. Joseph Mabbot.
Mr. W. Man, R. P.
Mr. Manning.
Reverend Mr. Marshall, R. P.
Mr. Francis Marshall.
Thomas Martin, *Esq*; R. P.
John Martin, *Esq*; R. P.
James Martin, *Esq*; R. P.
Mrs. Martin, R. P.
Mrs. Martin, R. P.
Thomas Mason, *Esq*;
Reverend Mr. Strentham Masters.
Miss Masters.
Mrs. Mathews.
Mr. Benjamin Mence.
Mr. Samuel Mence.
Mr. Richard Mence.
Mr. Nat. Mence.
Mrs. Mence.
Mr. Merrifield.
Reverend Mr. John Meysey.
Francis Meysey, *Esq*;
Mr. Armel Miles.
Reverend Mr. Miles.

W. Miles,

SUBSCRIBERS NAMES.

W. Mills, *Esq;* R. P.
Reverend Mr. Mitchell.
Mr. Mitchell
Mrs. Monnoux.
Reverend and Honourable Dr. Moor.
Sir John Morgan, *Bart.*
Reverend Mr. Morgan.
Reverend Mr. Luke Morgan, *two Copies.*
Miss Betty Morgan.
Miss Jenny Morgan.
Mr. John Morgan.
Rev. Mr. Morgan, *six Copies small, one R. P.*
Captain Thomas Morley.
Mr. W. Morrice.
Mr. Richard Morse.
Mr. Mortimer.
Reverend Mr. Mott.
Mr. William Mount.
Reverend Mr. Mutell.

N.

Right Hon. Lord North and Guilford, R. P.
Right Hon. the Countess of Northampton.
Mr. Nanfan.
Mr. Napper.
Reverend Mr. Nash.
Reverend Mr. Salway Nash.
Mr. Nash, *Student of Christ-Church.*
Rd. Nash, *Esq;*
Reverend Mr. Nash.

A L I S T of the

Mrs. Nash.
Reverend Mr. Nevile.
Reverend Dr. Newcome.
Reverend Mr. Newcome.
Reverend Dr. Newton.
Mr. Benjamin Newton.
Mr. Charles Newton.
Mrs. Mary Newton.
William Nichols, Esq;
Mr. Edward Nichols.
Reverend Mr. Nott.
Mrs. Norbury, R. P.
Mr. Robert Norman.
William Northy, Esq;
John Nourse, Esq;
John Nourse, Junior, Esq;
Mr. Philip Nourse.

O.

Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Ossory,
four Books.
Miss Offley, R. P.
Nat. Oldham, Esq;
Reverend Mr. Oliver.
Reverend Mr. Orret.
Reverend Dr. Osbaldeston.
Mr. Osbourne.
Reverend Mr. Owen.

Sir

SUBSCRIBERS NAMES.

P.

Sir Henry Parker, Bart. R. P.

Honourable Mr. Justice Probyn, R. P.

Mr. Edward Packer.

Reverend Mr. Pain, Archdeacon of Stow.

Reverend Mr. Pain.

Mr. Paine.

Mrs. Mary Palling.

Reverend Mr. Palmer.

Mrs. Hannah Palmer.

Reverend Mr. Parker.

Mrs. Parker.

Reverend Mr. Parkes.

Mrs. Parkes

Mr. Samuel Parks.

Reverend Mr. Parry.

Mr. Parry.

John Parsons, Esq; R. P.

Mr. Samuel Washbourn Parsons.

Mrs. Parsons, R. P.

Mrs. Jane Parsons.

Mrs. Parsons, R. P.

Mrs. Susannah Parsons, R. P.

Reverend Mr. Partridge.

Mr. John Patten.

Mr. Patten.

Mrs. Ann Pauncefort.

Mrs. Mary Pauncefort.

Mrs. Elianora Pauncefort.

A LIST of the

Reverend Mr. Payne.
Dr. Payton, R. P.
James Peachy, Esq;
Mr. Peachy.
Reverend Mr. Pearce.
Reverend Mr. Pearson.
Reverend Mr. Pease.
Mr. Edmund Pembridge.
Thomas Penoyer, Esq;
Mr. Periam.
Mr. Perks.
Mr. Jos. Penn.
Mr. Joshua Perry.
Mr. Phelps.
Reverend Mr. Philips.
Mrs. Philpott.
Mr. Piggot.
Reverend Mr. Pitt.
Mr. James Pitt.
Mr. Phil Pitt.
Mr. Hugh Platt.
Mrs. Plowden.
Mrs. Pool.
Reverend Mr. James Poole.
Mr. Poole.
Edward Popham, Esq; two Books.
Reverend Mr. Popple.
Reverend Mr. Powell
Thomas Powis, Esq;
Reverend Mr. Pratt.
Mr. Jos. Preedy.
Reverend Mr. Pretly.

Reverend

SUBSCRIBERS NAMES.

Reverend Mr. Price.
Reverend Mr. Price.
Reverend Mr. Price.
Mr. Pringle.
Reverend Mr. Pritchett.
Reverend Mr. Prynn.
Mr. Thomas Pulton.
Mr. Jos. Punter.
Mrs. Purcell.
Reverend Mr. Richard Pyle.

R.

Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Rochester.
Hon. Brigadier-General Read, two Copies.
Mr. Caleb Randolph.
Thomas Ratcliff, Esq;
Reverend Dr. Ratcliff.
John Ravenhill, Esq;
John Ravenhill, Esq;
Mr. Thomas Rawlins.
Mrs. Ready.
Mr. Richard Reeve.
Reverend Mr. Restall.
Mr. Bernard Rice.
Reverend Mr. Richardson.
Bisse Richards, Esq; R. P.
Mr. John Richards.
Mrs. Riley.
Rd. Roberts, Esq;
Mr. Thomas Roberts.

A LIST of the

Mr. Flack Roberts.
Rd. Roberts, *Esq*;
Dr. Roberts.
Reverend Mr. Robins.
Reverend Mr. Robinson.
Mr. Robinson, of Mert. College.
Mrs. Robinson.
Reverend Mr. Rodd.
Mrs. Rodd.
Reverend Mr. Roden.
Mr. Thomas Rogers, R. P.
Richard Rogers, *Esq*; R. P.
Reverend Mr. Rogers.
Reverend Mr. John Rolleston.
Mr. Samuel Rose.
Thomas Rouse, *Esq*;
Thomas Rowney, *Esq*;
Mr. Abel Rudhall.
Mr. Ruding.
Sir John Rushout, Bart. R. P.

S.

Lord Noel Somerfet.
Hon. John Stanhope.
Hon. Geo. Shirley, *Esq*;
Lady Fanny Shirley.
Reverend Mr. Salter.
Mr. Saltern.
Reverend Mr. Salway.

W. Sam-

SUBSCRIBERS NAMES.

W. Sambach, *Esq*; R. P.
Mr. Sambach, *two Copies*.
Mrs. Sambatch, R. P.
Reverend Mr. Sandby.
Mr. William Sanders.
Martin Sandys, *Esq*;
Reverend Mr. Sandys, R. P.
Thomas Savage, *Esq*;
Reverend Mr. Savage, *two Copies*, R. P.
Mr. Saunders.
Reverend Mr. Scott.
Mr. Scott.
Mr. Selwyn.
Reverend Mr. Senhouse.
Reverend Mr. Severn.
Mr. Jos. Severn.
Reverend Mr. Seward.
Germanicus Shepherd, *Esq*;
Sam. Shepherd, *Esq*;
Reverend Mr. Shepherd.
Mr. Shepherd.
Mrs. Shepherd.
Hon. Mr. Sherard.
Mr. W. Shipman.
Mr. John Shipman.
Brindly Skinner, *Esq*;
W. Skinner, *Esq*;
John Skinner, *Esq*;
John Skinner of Bickerton, *Esq*;
John Skipp, *Sen. Esq*;
John Skipp, *Jun. Esq*;

John

A LIST of the

John Arthur Slash, *Esq;*
Reverend Mr. Smalridge.
Mr. W. Smart.
W. Smith, *Esq;*
Reverend Mr. John Smith.
Reverend Mr. Smith.
Mr. Edw. Smith.
Mr. Smith.
John Soley, *Esq;*
Reverend Mr. Soley.
Mr. Soley.
Mrs. Soley.
Reverend Mr. Squire.
Reverend Mr. Stackhouse.
Reverend Mr. Standish.
Sir W. Stanhope.
Sir W. Stapylton, R. P.
Reverend Mr. Stevens.
Reverend Mr. Stevens.
Reverend Mr. Stevens.
Mr. Thomas Stevens.
Miss Cas. Stevens.
Mr. Joseph Stevenson.
Reverend Dr. Stillingfleet, *two Copies.*
Reverend Mr. Edward Stillingfleet.
Reverend Mr. Robert Stillingfleet.
Reverend Mr. Stinton.
Reverend Mr. Stokes.
Mr. Richard Stratford.
Mr. Geo. Surtees.
Reverend Mr. Sutton, *three Copies.*

Mrs.

SUBSCRIBERS NAMES.

Mrs. Sutton, *R. P.*
Joseph Swaine, *Esq;*
Bennet Swaine, *Esq;*
Mr. Thomas Swaine.
Mr. James Swaine.
Mr. Thomas Swift.
Reverend Mr. Swinton.
Thomas Symonds, *Esq;* *R. P.*
John Symons, *two Copies*, *R. P.*
Mrs. Symons.

T.

Right Hon. Lord Tracy, *R. P.*
Right Hon. Lady Tracy, *R. P.*
Mr. Talbott, *R. P.*
Mr. Sam. Tanner.
Mr. Tapson.
W. Taylor, *Esq;*
Reverend Mr. Taylor.
Reverend Mr. Taylor of Todenham.
Reverend Mr. Taylor of Malpes.
Reverend Mr. Taylor.
Reverend Mr. Taylor of Ripple.
Mr. Nat. Taylor.
Reverend Mr. Taylor.
Mr. Richard Territ.
Reverend Mr. Thatch.
Mr. Tho. Thomas.
Beilby Thompson, *Esq;* *R. P.*
Reverend Mr. Will, Thompson.

Reve-

A LIST of the

Reverend Mr. Thornton.

Dr. Thorp.

Mr. Thrupp.

Mr. John Tilbury.

John Tilson, Esq;

Reverend Mr. Titley.

Miss Todd, R. P.

Mr. Tomkyn.

Mrs. Tonnerton.

Reverend Mr. Tooker.

Reverend Mr. Tookey.

Mr. Tothill.

Reverend Mr. Tottie.

Hen. Towneshend, Esq;

Hen. Toy, Esq;

Robert Tracy, Esq; R. P.

Mrs. Tracy, R. P.

Mrs. Tracy of Coscomb.

Mr. Travell.

Mrs. Trebeck.

Mr. John Trevanion.

Mr. Trewren.

John Trovell, Esq;

Dr. Trowe.

Miss Molly Tuckfield.

Jollyffe Tuffnell, Esq;

Reverend Mr. Turbeville.

Mr. Turner, A. M.

Mr. Turner.

Mrs. Margaret Turner.

Miss Turton.

Mr.

SUBSCRIBERS NAMES.

Mr. Fran. Tyler.
Reverend Mr. Tyrer.

U.

Reverend Mr. Veale, *four Copies.*
Mr. Veale.
William Vernon, *Esq;*
Reverend Mr. Thomas Vernon.
Reverend Mr. Vernon.
Mr. Henry Vernon of Gloucester.
Mrs. Anne Vernon.
Reverend Mr. Peter Vidall.
Robert Unett, *Esq;*

W.

Right Honourable Lord Wenman, *R. P.*
Right Reverend Lord Bishop of Worcester,
six Copies, R. P.
Reverend Dr. Walker, *Archdeacon of Here-*
ford.
Hon. Tho. Winnington, *Esq;* *four Copies,*
R. P.
Mrs. Mary Wagstaff.
Fran. Walker, *Esq;*
Dr. Wall, *R. P.*
James Wallwyn, *Esq;* *R. P.*
John Walsham, *Esq;*
Mr. Walters.
Miss Patty Ward.

Miss

A LIST of the

Miss Bidly Ward.
Mr. Will. Warkman.
Mr. John Warren.
Mr. Thomas Weale.
Mr. Weaver.
Mr. Webb.
Mrs. Webb.
Reverend Mr. Charles Webber.
Reverend Mr. Fran. Webber.
Reverend Mr. Weeksey.
Mr. Richard Weeksey.
Will. Welby, *Esq;*
Mrs. Welby.
Reverend Mr. Wells.
Mr. Wells.
Reverend Mr. Wells.
Charl. Wheeler, *Esq;*
Reverend Mr. Wheeler.
Mr. Charl. Whitaker, *R. P.*
Mr. Hen. Witaker.
Reverend Mr. Whitefoot.
Reverend Mr. Whitehead.
Reverend Mr. Whitehead of Sedgeburrow.
Mr. Wigmore.
John Willes, *Esq;* *six Copies.*
Reverend Mr. Wilkins.
Mr. Jo. Wilkinfon.
Reverend Mr. John Williams.
Reverend Mr. Williams.
Reverend Mr. Williams.
Mr. Williams.

Mrs.

SUBSCRIBERS NAMES.

Mrs. Sarah Williams.
Reverend Mr. Williamson, R. P.
Miss Williamson, R. P.
Reverend Mr. Willmott.
Mr. Willmott.
Mrs. Willmott.
Reverend Dr. Wilson, *two Copies.*
Mr. John Wilson.
Reverend Mr. Wiltshire, *two Copies.*
Reverend Mr. Winchester.
Reverend Mr. Winde.
Mrs. Window, R. P.
Tho. Winford, *Esq;*
Mr. Geo. Wingfield.
Reginald Winnyatt, *Esq;*
Will. Wise, *Esq;*
Mrs. Mary Wise.
Reverend Mr. Wolley.
Mr. Richard Wolley.
Mr. Edw. Wolley.
Mrs. Wood, R. P.
Mr. Tho. Woodcock.
Reverend Mr. Woode.
Mrs. Sarah Wooden.
Mrs. Woodford.
Fran. Woodhouse, *Esq;*
Reverend Mr. Woods, *two Copies.*
Reverend Dr. Worth.
Mr. Worth.
Mrs. Wright.
Rob. Wylde, *Esq;*

A LIST, &c.

Y.

The Honourable Philip York, Esq;
The Honourable Charles York, Esq;
Honourable Lady Young, R. P.
Mr. Gervase Yarwood.
Mr. Peter Yarworth.
Mrs. Anne Yend.
Mr. Yeo.



5 Y61

THE



A
L I S T
OF THE
SUBSCRIBERS NAMES.

Note, R. P. signifies Royal Paper.

A.

M R. Abley.
Reverend Mr. Adcock.
Mrs. Martha Adcock.
Mrs. Adams.
Mr. Edward Alcock.
Reverend Mr. Aldersey.
Ralph Allen, *Esq*;
Reverend Mr. Allfounder.
Reverend Mr. Allison.
Mr. Thomas Alsop.
Mr. William Amphlet.
Edward Andrews, *Esq*;
Mrs. Andrews.

a

Mr.

A LIST of the

Mr. Archer.
Mr. Archer.
Mr. Arnold.
Stephen Ashby, Esq; two Copies.
Mrs. Ashby, two Copies.
Mr. Ashfield.
Mr. Charles Ashfield.
Mr. Ashhurst.
Mr. Ashwood.
Mr. Asticke.
Reverend Mr. Astley.
Reverend Mr. Astry.
Dr. Atwood.
Mr. Atwood.
Herbert Aubrey, Jun. Esq;
Reverend Dr. Ayerst.
Reverend Mr. Fran. Aylmer.

B.

Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Bristol. R.P.
Reverend Mr. Archdeacon Breton.
Reverend Mr. Badger.
John Baker, Esq;
Mr. Charles Baldwyn.
Mrs. Ballard.
Mr. Banbury.
Mrs. Anne Barker, R. P.
Bar. Rd. Barneby, Esq; R. P.
Mr. Barnes.
Reverend Mr. W. Barnes.

Reverend

SUBSCRIBERS NAMES.

Reverend Mr. Barnes.
Mr. Hen. Barnes.
Reverend Mr. Baron.
Reverend Dr. Barton.
Mr. Barton.
Mrs. Bateman.
Mr. John Baxter, R. P.
Thomas Bayley, Esq;
Mr. Bayley.
Mr. John Baylis.
Thomas Beal, Esq;
Mr. Benjamin Beal.
Mr. Charles Bean.
Reverend Dr. Bearcroft.
Reverend Mr. Bedford.
Reverend Dr. Behn.
Mrs. Bell.
Mr. Samuel Benfield.
Reverend Mr. Bennet.
Mr. Ed. Bennett.
Reverend Mr. Benson.
Mr. Benson.
Reverend Mr. Scroop Berdinore.
Mr. Bere.
Miss Diana Bertie.
Mr. Ed. Best.
Reverend Mr. Betham.
Mr. Richard Bickerton.
Mr. Bickford.
Robert Biddolph, Esq; R. P.
Francis Biddolph, Esq;

A LIST of the

Reverend Mr. Bird.
Mr. George Bird.
Reverend Mr. Bingham.
Reverend Mr. Bishop.
Reverend Mr. Bisse.
Walter Blacket, *Esq*;
Reverend Dr. Bland.
Reverend Mr. Bland.
Mr. Blayney.
Reverend Mr. Bond.
Mrs. Bordieu.
Mr. George Bouchier.
Shuckburgh Boughton, *Esq*;
Reverend Mr. Boulton.
Reverend Mr. Bourn.
Mrs. Anne Bowdler.
Mrs. Lucy Bowes.
Mrs. Margaret Bowes.
William Boydges, *Esq*;
Edm. Bradbury, *Esq*;
Reverend Mr. Bradley.
Reverend Mr. Brassington.
Reverend Mr. Bray.
Mr. Thomas Bree.
Reverend Mr. Bridges.
Mrs. Bridgman.
Mr. Robert Bright.
Mr. Broadribb.
William Bromley of Upton, *Esq*; two Copies,
R. P.
W. Bromley of Worcester, *Esq*; R. P.
Mrs.

SUBSCRIBERS NAMES.

Mrs. Margaret Bromley.
Mrs. Anne Bromley.
Mrs. Elizabeth Bromley.
Reverend Mr. Brooke.
Mr. Thomas Brookholding.
Dr. Edm. Brooks.
Mr. Brookes.
Reverend Mr. Broughton.
Reverend Mr. Brown.
Mr. Bryan.
Richard Brydges, Esq;
Mr. Thomas Brydges.
W. Buckle, Esq;
Mr. Richard Buckle.
Mr. Bund.
Mr. Bunny, Sen.
Sir Robert Burdett, Bart. R. P.
Reverend Mr. Burkett.
Mr. John Burriſh
Mr. Samuel Burroughs.
George Burton, Esq;
Reverend Dr. Burton.
Reverend Mr. George Burton.
Reverend Mr. Burton.
Reverend Mr. Bar. Burton.
Mr. Philip Burton.
Thomas Butler, Esq;
Mr. Butler.
Reverend Dr. Byrch, ſix Copies.
Mr. John Byrch.
Reverend Mr. Peter Byrch.

A LIST of the

C.

Right Honourable the Earl of Coventry, R. P.

Right Hon. Countess Dowager Coventry, R. P.

Right Hon. Lady Anne Coventry, 2 R. P.

Reverend Mr. Callow.

Mrs. Elizabeth Calvert.

Richard Cambridge, Esq;

— Canning, Esq;

Mrs. Mary Carpenter.

Mr. Carthew.

Reverend Mr. Castleman.

Mr. John Chadner.

Edmond Chamberlain, Jun. Esq;

Mr. Thomas Cheeke.

Mr. Thomas Cheeke, London.

Reverend Dr. Cheney.

Mrs. Elizabeth Chester Cann, R. P.

Mrs. Chester, R. P.

Mr. Thomas Chetbe.

Reverend Mr. Child.

William Chinn, Esq;

John Cholmeley, Esq;

Reverend Mr. Cholmeley.

Mrs. Cholmeley.

Mrs. Cholmeley of London.

Mrs. Rebecca Cholmeley.

Reverend Mr. Clare.

Reverend Mr. James Clark.

Reverend Mr. John Clark.

Mrs. Clarke.

Reverend

SUBSCRIBERS NAMES.

Reverend Mr. Clement.
Mr. Samuel Clements.
Mr. Clements.
Allen Cliffe, Esq.
Mr. Cliffe.
Mrs. Cliffe, R. P.
Edward Clive, Esq; R. P.
Mr. John Clutton.
Reverend Mr. Cock.
Reverend Dr. Cockman, two Copies.
John Cocks, Esq; R. P.
Lady Cocks, Jun.
Reverend Mr. Collins.
Mr. Athony Compere.
Reverend Dr. Coneybeare, R. P.
Mrs. Conningsby.
Dennis Cooke, Esq;
Thomas Cooke, Esq;
Mrs. Cooke.
Mr. Cooke, King's-College, Cambridge.
Mrs. Cooke.
Richard Cookesey, Esq;
Reverend Mr. John Cookesey.
Velters Cornwall, Esq; R. P.
Reverend Mr. Cofferat.
Robert Cotton, Esq;
Mr. George Couchet.
Thomas Coventry, Esq;
Reverend Mr. Cowper.
Sir Robert Cox, Bart.
Mr. Cox.

A LIST of the

Mr. Joseph Crane.

Mr. John Crawe.

Mr. Edward Croft.

Reverend Mr. Crouch.

Reverend Dr. Croxall.

Reverend Mr. Croxall.

Mr. Cutcliffe.

D.

Right Reverend Lord Bishop of Durham, R. P.

Reverend Mr. John Darke.

Mr. W. Darke.

Mrs. Anne Darke.

Reverend Mr. John Davie.

Reverend Mr. Jos. Davies.

Reverend Mr. Davies.

Mr. John Davies.

Mr. Jacob Davies.

Mr. William Davies.

Mr. Davies, Apothecary.

Mrs. Margaret Davies.

Mr. Samuel Dawkes.

Mr. Isaac Deacons.

Mr. Delabere.

Mrs. Esther Delabere, R. P.

John Delahay, Esq;

Mrs. Delane.

Mr. Joseph Dennis.

Reverend Mr. Dew.

Fran. Dowdeswell, Esq;

Mr. Dowdeswell.

Mrs.

SUBSCRIBERS NAMES.

Mrs. Dowdeswell.

Reverend Mr. Dowglass.

Reverend Mr. Doyley.

Mrs. Draper.

Mr. William Drinkwater.

Mr. Drought.

Mr. John Duncomb.

Mr. Richard Dunn.

Reverend Mr. Dykes.

E.

Reverend Mr. Archdeacon Evans, *six Copies*,
R. P.

Mr. Edmund Eaton.

Mrs. Eckley.

Reverend Mr. Eden.

Reverend Dr. Edgecombe.

Mr. John Elton.

Kingsmill Evans, *Esq*; *two Copies*.

Walter Edwards, *Esq*; R. P.

Mrs. Edwards.

Mr. Elford.

Reverend Dr. Ellis.

Mr. Ellis.

Mr. James Elly.

Reverend Mr. Eustace.

Reverend Dr. Eyre.

Mrs. Eyres, R. P.

Reverend Mr. Seth Eyres.

Reverend Dr. Eyton.

Mr.

A LIST of the

F

Honourable Mr. Fitzpatrick.

Reverend Dr. Fanshaw.

Mr. Farmer.

Reverend Mr. Fawcette.

Mr. Fendall.

Mr. Fetherstone.

Mrs. Fidoe.

Mr. Rd. Finch.

Lady Fisher.

Reverend Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Robert Fisher.

Reverend Mr. Fitz-Edwards.

Mr. Thomas Fletcher.

Mrs. Margaret Fletcher.

Mrs. Floyer.

Thomas Foley, Esq;

Thomas Foley, Junior, Esq;

Mr. Thomas Ford.

Mr. Edward Ford.

Mr. Foote.

Mr. Thomas Fortescue, four Copies.

Mr. James Fortescue.

Mr. Fortescue.

Reverend Mr. Forthergill.

Mrs. Francombe.

Mr. John Freeman.

Mr. John Freeman.

Mr. Francis Freeman.

Mr.

SUBSCRIBERS NAMES.

Mr. Thomas Freeman.
Richard Freeman, *Esq;* R. P.
Mrs. Freeman, R. P.
Mr. Edward Freeman.
Lady Anne Furnes.

G.

Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Gloucester,
R. P.
Right Honourable Lord Viscount Gage, R. P.
Reverend Dr. Gally.
Mr. Thomas Gardner.
John Garway, *Esq;*
Reverend Dr. Geekie.
Mr. John Geers.
Reverend Mr. Hen. Geers.
Reverend Mr. Tim. Geers.
Reverend Mr. Gelsthorp.
Mr. Gibbs.
Mr. Glynn.
Reverend Mr. Goodall.
Reverend Mr. Gore.
Mrs. Mel. Gorges.
Reverend Mr. Granger.
William Gregay, *Esq;*
Mr. William Cope Gregory, *two Copies.*
Reverend Dr. Gregory.
Reverend Mr. Gregory.
Mrs. Susanna Gregory
Reverend Dr. Greenwood.

Mr.

A LIST of the

Mr. Richard Grevile.
Reverend Mr. James Griffiths.
Mr. Griffiths.
Reverend Mr. Griffith.
Reverend Mr. Guest.
Mr. Barnaby Gunn.
Reverend Mr. Gutteridge.
Reverend Mr. Gwinett.

H.

Right Honourable Earl of Haddington, L. P.
Reverend Mr. Hackam.
Mrs. Hagar.
Mr. John Haines.
Mr. Peter Haines.
Mr. Edward Hale.
Reverend Mr. Hall.
Mrs. Hall.
Mr. Hall, Magdalene College, Oxon.
Mrs. Hall.
Benjamin Hall, Esq;
Reverend Mr. Hallings.
Honourable Mr. Hamilton.
Honourable Mr. Hamilton.
Thomas Hanbury, Esq;
Edward Handford, Esq;
William Hanmer, Esq; R. P.
Mrs. Hanmer, two Copies, R. P.
Mrs. M. Hanmer, two Copies, R. P.
Mrs. Feb. Hanmer, two Copies, R. P.
Edward Harley, Esq; R. P.

Reverend

SUBSCRIBERS'S NAMES.

Reverend Mr. Harper.
Reverend Mr. Harper, of Beckford.
Mr. Harris.
Mrs. Harris.
Reverend Mr. Harris, two Copies.
Mr. Robert Harrifon.
Mr. William Harrifon.
Mr. John Hartland.
Mrs. Lucy Harward.
Reverend Mr. Harwood, R. P.
William Haskins, Esq;
Mr. Edward Hart.
Mr. Haslem.
Mr. Thomas Haffel.
Miss Lucy Haslewood.
Mr. Richard Hathaway.
Mr. Hatherley.
Mr. John Havard.
Mr. Hawkins.
Reverend Mr. Hawes.
Lady Hawley.
Thomas Hayward, Esq; two Copies, R. P.
Mr. Thomas Hayward.
Mr. W. Hayward, R. P.
Reverend Mr. Hayward.
Mr. Hope Hayward.
Miss Hazlewood.
Reverend Mr. Head.
Reverend Mr. Head.
Reverend Mr. Heaton.
Mr. Heathcote.
James Hereford, Gent.

Miss

A LIST of the

Miss Hern.

Reverend Mr. Heyward.

Reverend Mr. Heywood.

Reverend Mr. Hickes.

Reverend Mr. Hickford.

Reverend Mr. Hinckfman, *R. P.*

Mr. John Hitckcock.

Mr. Charles Hinckfman.

Reverend Mr. Holbrook.

Reverend Mr. Holbrook, *Glocestershire.*

Reverend Dr. Holcombe.

Reverend Mr. Holcomb.

Richard Helden, *Esq;*

Reverend Mr. Hole.

Mr. Holland.

Mr. Honey.

Reverend Mr. Hooper.

Mr. Hope.

Mr. Alderman Hopkins

Edward Cope Hopton, *Esq;*

Richard Cope Hopton, *Esq;*

Richard Hopton, *Esq;*

Mr. William Hopton.

Mr. Michael Hopton.

Mrs. Elizabeth Hopton.

Mrs. Frances Hopton.

Richard Hopton, *Esq;* *two Copies.*

Mr. Taberlain Hords.

Mrs. Horton.

Mr. Thomas Hoskins.

Mr. James Howard.

Reverend

SUBSCRIBERS NAMES.

Reverend Mr. Hotchkins.
Mr. Samuel Howard, *two Copies.*
Mrs. Alice Hotchkis.
Mr. Howe, R. P.
Reverend Mr. Hughs.
Mr. Wat. Humphreys.
Dr. Hunter.
Reverend Mr. Hunter.
Mr. Richard Hufe.
Reverend Dr. Hutton, *two Copies, R. P.*

I.

Reverend Mr. Jackson.
Mr. Joseph Jackson, R. P.
Nicholas Jackson, *Esq;* R. P.
Mr. Edward Jackson.
Mrs. Mary Jackson.
Mrs. Ann Jackson, *two Copies.*
Mr. Jamblyn.
Thomas Jarvis, *Esq;*
Reverend Mr. Jarvis.
Mrs. Jane Jauncey.
Mr. Ibbetson.
Reverend Dr. Jenifon, R. P.
Reverend Dr. Jenner, *six Copies.*
Mr. Mich. Jennings.
Mr. Nat. Jeynes.
Reverend Mr. Inglish.
Reverend Mr. Ingram.
Mr. John Ingram.

Thomas

A LIST of the

Thomas Johns, *Esq;*
 Reverend Mr. Johnson
 Thomas Jollyffe, *Esq;* R. P.
 Mrs. Ann Jones.
 Reverend Mr. Henry Jones.
 Mr. Roger Jones.
 Reverend Mr. Jones.
 Reverend Mr. Jones, of *Tiddenham*.
 Reverend Mr. Samuel Jones.
 Mrs. Hannah Jones.
 Reverend Mr. Penry Jones.
 Mr. John Jones.
 Reverend Mr. Jones, *fix Copies*.
 Mr. Ireland.
 K.
 Mr. John Knotesford.
 Thomas Kemble, *Esq;*
 Reverend Dr. Kemble.
 Mr. Thomas Kenamett.
 Reverend Dr. Kenrick.
 Mr. Kent.
 Mrs. Agnes Keyte, R. P.
 Mr. John King.
 Mr. John King of Gloucester.
 Mr. Kingscote.
 Mr. Thomas Knight.
 John Kerwood, *Esq;*
 Thomas Kyte, *Esq;*

L. Mr.



THE
CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

The Power of Conscience in dismaying the wicked, and animating the good.

PROV. xxviii. 1.

The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion. page 1

SERMON II.

The Nature and Extent of the Gospel Morality.

PHILIP. iv. 8.

Finally, Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure,
c what-

The CONTENTS.

whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.

p. 20

SERMON III.

The wisdom of early seeking the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness.

MATTH. vi. 36.

But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

p. 41

SERMON IV.

The Example of our Saviour, an Inducement to submit to the Divine Will.

JOHN xviii. latter part of the 11th verse.

The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

p. 58

SERMON

The CONTENTS.

SERMON V.

A Funeral Sermon on the Death of Bishop
LLOYD.

REV. xiv. 13.

I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. P. 77

SERMON VI.

The Parable of the Prodigal considered.

LUKE xv. 17, 18, 19, 20.

And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger?

I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

And he arose, and came to his father. p. 99.

The CONTENTS.

SERMON VII.

At the Primary Visitation of MARTIN
Lord Bishop of Gloucester.

JOHN xv. 8.

*Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear
much fruit.* p. 121

SERMON VIII.

God is our Father.

ISAIAH lxiv. 8.

O Lord, thou art our Father. page 138

SERMON IX.

Religion the Rest of all that labour, and are
heavy laden.

MATTH. xi. 28.

*Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy
laden, and I will give you rest.* p. 160

SERMON

The CONTENTS.

SERMON X.

The Witnesses of the Being and Goodness
of God.

ACTS xiv. 17.

Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

P. 175

SERMON XI.

God's Providence to the People of this
Nation.

ISAIAH v. 3, 4.

And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah: judge, I pray you, betwixt Me and my Vineyard. What could have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?

P. 193

SERMON

The CONTENTS.

SERMON XII.

The Duty of Blessing God, and the Motives to it.

2 COR. i. 3.

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.

p. 210

SERMON XIII.

The Parable of the foolish rich Man.

LUKE xii. 20, 21.

But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.

p. 228

SERMON

The CONTENTS.

SERMON XIV.

The Parable of the foolish rich Man.

LUKE xii. 20, 21.

But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee, then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.

P. 243

SERMON XV.

The malignant Nature of Envy.

GEN. xxxvii. 11.

And his brethren envied him.

P. 259

SERMON XVI.

The Certainty of Death.

PSAL. lxxxix. 48.

What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?

p. 281

SERMON

The CONTENTS.

SERMON XVII.

The Uncertainty of the Time of Death.

PROV. xxvii. 1.

Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

p. 295



SERMON



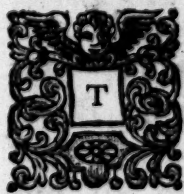
S E R M O N I.

The power of Conscience in dismay-
ing the wicked, and animating
the good.

Preached before the KING, July 5, 1724.

P R O V. xxviii. 1.

*The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but
the righteous are bold as a lion.*



THESE words are a just representation of the different effects of I. Good and Evil; the dread and horror which is the unhappy consequent of the one, and the firmness of mind which is the genuine result of the other. The wicked flee when none pursueth, when there is no visible appearance of danger; though there be none near them to strike a terror into their hearts, they yet are terrors to themselves. The
B bold-

S E R M. boldness of the righteous is illustrated by

I. the comparison of a Lion, the most undaunted among the creatures of the earth, who, according to the language of the Prophet, Isa. 31. 4. *When a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them.* The righteous man's integrity and uprightness inspire him with a calm and sedate courage; his heart is stablished and will not shrink in dangers and distresses, amidst all the various changes and chances of this mortal life.

In my following discourse I propose to consider the nature and grounds of the Fear of the wicked and the Boldness of the righteous, and to deduce some suitable inferences with respect to both.

Now this Fear of the wicked is not a reverential and filial fear; for that is the portion of the just alone: but a tormenting and slavish fear, raised by the severe reflexions and bitter reproaches of Conscience, that active principle which the Supreme Being hath constituted his vicegerent in the soul of man; whose workings mix with all our thoughts and all our actions; whose peculiar and proper office it is, to inform us what we should do and what we should decline, and, as our actions vary, to applaud or reprove, to acquit or condemn us. If then we do wickedly, it gives the sentence and begins the punishment. These

These terrors of conscience commenced S E R M.
in Paradise; for no sooner had our first pa- I.
rents forfeited their integrity, than they lost
their courage; as soon as they ceased to be
innocent, they began to be afraid: the ter-
rors of the Lord fell upon them, and an
horrible dread overwhelmed them. When
God called to the man, and said, *Where art
thou?* he answered, *I heard thy voice in the
garden, and was afraid*, Gen. 3. 9, 10. Had
the voice of God been attended then, as it
was afterwards at the delivery of the Law,
with thunders, and lightnings, and the sound
of the trumpet, they might have had great
reason to have been fore afraid. But God's
coming to them at that time is described as
the coming of one *walking in the cool of the
day*, and when they heard his voice *they hid
themselves from the presence of the Lord among
the trees*. Why did they fly from him?
Why did they endeavour to hide themselves
from his presence? They were conscious of
their guilt, and therefore they were afraid
to approach Him whose command they had
so presumptuously transgressed: their con-
sciences were the witnesses that accused them,
and the judges that condemned them.

This fear of the wicked cleaves so closely
to the soul, that it will not be wholly sha-
ken off. Can the riotous jollity of dissolute
libertines put an end to it? On the con-
trary, in the midst of laughter their heart

S E R M is sorrowful; some bitter melancholy thought

I. now and then arises, which, like the handwriting on the wall we read of in the book of *Daniel*, chap. 5. ver. 6. *changeth their countenances*, and spreads a dampness over their spirits. Is it in the power of wit and sophistry to extinguish this fear? The confusions and amazements which at some seasons the most sanguine unbelievers discover, are a strong and uncontrollable proof of the contrary: The confident assertors of the natural liberty of mankind, whom they falsely pretend to have been long, through the contrivance of Priests, led captive by senseless terrors, even these men, with all their boasted freedom of thought, have been under the bondage of dark distrusts, and jealous misgiving fears. Shall the authority and power of the rulers of this world, which place them out of the reach of human sanctions, set them free from this fear? Did not *Herod*, when he heard of the fame of *Jesus*, say, *This is John the Baptist, he is risen from the dead?* Matt. 14. 1, 2. He had beheaded the Baptist, and the fame of *Jesus* awakened his thoughts, and put him in mind of that holy man whom he had murdered; his heart smote him, his conscience was troubled and filled with confusion. Can length of time extinguish this fear? Indeed when the sons of *Jacob* had sold their brother into *Egypt*, they seemed for

for a while to be easy within themselves; S E R M.
 their father was deceived, and the hand of I.
 God did not touch them: But at last brake
 forth the fire which had lain long smothered
 in their breasts; for God sent a sore famine,
 and they went to *Egypt* to buy corn, and
 were brought before their now unknown
 brother *Joseph*, and *Joseph* telling them that
 they were spies, and sending them for their
 brother *Benjamin*, their hearts burned with-
 in them; their consciences were touched;
 they said among themselves, *What is this*
that the Lord hath done unto us? Behold, we
have sinned against our brother, in that we
saw the anguish of his soul, and would not
hear him; now is his blood required at our
hands. In short, such is the nature of guilty
 fear, that it is not in the power of man en-
 tirely to overcome it; which argues the
 force of conscience to be impressed upon his
 mind, and wrought into his very composi-
 tion. Vain are all his subtile arts and labo-
 rious contrivances to stifle its convictions,
 and impose a silence upon its remonstrances:
 Though he should cast mire and dirt into
 that fountain, yet by degrees it will refine
 and reflect the images of his guilt in its truest
 shape and fullest dimensions.

In the further prosecution of this head of
 discourse, we may distinctly consider this
 fear of the wicked as grounded upon a re-
 view of his sins, upon a bitter reflexion on

S E R M. his having made God his enemy, and upon
 I. a terrible apprehension of punishment in
 the next life, unless he breaks off his sins by
 righteousness in this.

When those powerful enemies of our souls, the world, the flesh, and the devil, lay temptations in the way of the unguarded Christian, how easily is he beguiled! how eagerly does he seize the sweet delusion! how fondly does he seek his own destruction! Without intermission he indulges to sensual gratifications; without thought he plunges into all the depths of sin, and, as the *Leviathan* in the waters, takes his pastime therein. But how soon does the delightful Phantom disappear! and what does it leave behind it, but regret and confusion of face? Now how sensibly is he convinced of the deceitfulness of sin! how sensibly is he convinced, that the satisfaction in the enjoyment of his vices was too transient, that the remembrance of them is too grievous, and their burden too intolerable!

There is that particular disagreeableness in all wilful sin; it is such a contradiction to reason and wisdom, to justice and duty, such a shame and blemish to our natures; it hath such stains and pollutions attending it, and is not only deformed it self, but so effectually transmits its loathsome features wheresoever it rests, that the vicious person cannot but be a very unpleasant sight to himself; he

The Power of Conscience.

7

he cannot be able to look back upon his evil S E R M.
courses with any manner of complacency, I.
but he must find, that the pleasures of sin
are not only vanity in themselves, but also
vexation of spirit in their consequences.
For instance; how pleasing soever the stragem of the revengeful was when seen in prospect, yet afterwards, when the bloody purposes are put in execution, though his successful villany hath escaped the Judge's inquest, though no accuser, no accomplice knows what he hath done, the fact yet wants privacy, there is one too many yet, even he that wrought it, conscious of the sin; from himself therefore he would fain conceal it, and banish the memory of it from his own mind. But his endeavours to drive it from him are all defeated by the churlish and untractable reproaches of his own heart; his conscience grows loud and peremptory, will not receive an answer, or be satisfied with excuses and alleviations, but intrudes upon him at his feasts and cheerful entertainments, breaks in upon his Retirements, pursues him to his chamber, to his closet, to his bed, and will not suffer him to be at rest. The remembrance of every other known sin consented to, is attended with a proportionable remorse, and horror, and anguish; every reflexion upon it, every thought is full of misery and bitterness, and the sinner hereby experimentally verifies the

SERM. observation of the Prophet, *Isa. 57. 20, 21.*

I. *The wicked are like a troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt; there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.*

As this trouble, and disquiet, and fear of the wicked is raised by a sad review of his sins, so is it heightened

Secondly, By a bitter reflexion on his having made God his enemy.

It is a certain truth, that God is every man's friend or enemy; there is no medium; he must be the one or the other.

If we sincerely love him, and are afraid of offending him; if we imitate his perfections, and obey his holy laws, then we may be assured that God is our friend. On the other hand, if we chuse not the fear of the Lord; if when he calls we refuse, and when he stretcheth out his hand we will not regard; if we trample upon his laws and cast his words behind us, then we can expect nothing else but that he will be our Enemy.

What peace therefore and comfort can the sinner have, yea rather with what horror and anguish must his soul be filled and disquieted, when he considers that he hath made God his enemy, That God, who would have been his friend, if he would have suffer'd him?

How

How can he forbear trembling when he S E R M. considers that eye which is all-seeing, that I. power which is irresistible, that justice which is inflexible? How can he lean upon the hope of God's mercy and loving-kindness, when his own heart suggests to him, that they are shut up in displeasure; when instead of a gracious God, embracing him with the most tender affection, it represents him as a jealous God, burning with the most furious anger? How can he, without the greatest concern and sorrow of mind, reflect on the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Jesus Christ; on the exquisite, the unknown sufferings which he endured for the salvation of mankind, when he considers that for so great, so invaluable, such incomprehensible love, he hath made the most ungrateful returns of scorn and despight, by continuing in those transgressions for which the Son of God was wounded, and those iniquities for which he was bruised?

But the fear of the wicked must appear to be more grievous and tormenting, when we consider it

Thirdly, As further heightened by a terrible apprehension of Punishment in the next life, unless he breaks off his sins by righteousness in this.

That there will be a state of retribution, is a truth dictated by natural Religion,
but

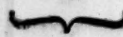
SERM but more fully proclaimed by the voice of

I. Revelation. God, *who is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent*, Numb. 23. 19. hath in the most express positive terms declared, that there shall be a day of judgment, an important and decisive day, wherein every man shall receive according to what he hath done in this life; a day of lamentation, and woe, and great mourning. As certainly as God is just, the wicked shall be punished: so that the torments he suffers in this life are but the beginnings of sorrows, but images and foretastes of what he is to expect hereafter in an infinitely greater measure. How then can he reconcile his guilty soul to security? How can he have any repose amidst those tempests, which the thoughts of the last day must raise in his mind? On the contrary, how must he be disquieted, and afflicted, and amazed, when that faithful Monitor his conscience puts him in mind of the dreadful solemnity of the final judgment, when the books shall be opened, and every man judged according to the things contained in them! But how greatly must the agonies of the impenitently wicked be increased, what mighty terrors will overwhelm him, when he languishes upon the bed of sickness, when Death approaches him, when his soul, ready to break loose out of the body, stands upon the brink of eternity,

eternity, and from thence discovers the end-S E R M.
less torments due to sin! What does he *now* I.
think of all his impiety and infidelity, and
the desperate follies of his past life? Does
he *now* think it wit and gallantry to scoff at
religion and make a mock at sin? Does he
now think it true courage to defy the God
of heaven, and real cowardise to be afraid
of everlasting misery? Does he not most ar-
dently, but *vainly* wish, that he had never
known those sinful pleasures and delights
which he so eagerly pursued, so fondly em-
braced, and wherein he placed his ulti-
mate happiness? that he had followed the
dictates of his conscience, and hearkned to
the voice of God, that so he might have
been freed from those terrors which he now
feels, and those infinitely greater which he
fears!

Having considered the nature and grounds
of the fear of the wicked, I proceed now
to take a view of the boldness of the righ-
teous: Previously to which it may be useful
to observe, that the title of *Righteous*, in
its perfection, does not, cannot properly be-
long to any of the Sons of *Adam*. But al-
though we cannot pretend to an entire
righteousness, to an *absolute* and unerring
obedience; although we are able to perform
but low imperfect services, interrupted with
numberless failings, yet the holy scriptures
style those men righteous, whose endea-
vours

S E R M. yours in the ways of religion are hearty, tho'

I.  their performances cannot possibly be exact; who are sincere, though they cannot be perfect; who do not obstinately resist, but willingly comply with the gracious motions of God's holy Spirit, and strive to the utmost to keep their consciences void of offence towards God and towards men: These the word of God allows to be righteous, and these are they who are bold as a lion, filled with courage and resolution, and fearing none but God, in the various circumstances of life. So that however some have laboured to represent religion as an *unmanly and dispiriting* institution, yet if it be impartially considered, it will be evident, that it hath not the spirit of fear but of *power*, not of bondage, but of perfect freedom.

This happy, fearless and composed state of the righteous man's mind may be considered, as arising from a pleasing review of his past good actions, from a comfortable reflexion that he hath made God his friend, and from a prospect of eternal happiness in the world to come.

As there is that turpitude and deformity in vice, which the sinner cannot look back upon without terror and disquietude, so there is that beauty and comeliness in virtue, which the good man cannot reflect on without the greatest complacency and delight. The heathen moralists ever describe their virtuous

man

man easy and calm in his mind, without S E R M.
discomposure and disorder, the consciousness I.
of having acted suitably to the dignity of his nature having a certain tendency to affect him with the most substantial pleasure; for which reason one of the *wisest* amongst them determined, that one day spent well and agreeably to the precepts of virtue, is worth a whole eternity of vice. (*Cic. Tusc. Quæst. l. 5.*) Such peace and tranquillity, such joy and confidence are the genuine effect of habitual virtue, in opposition to the disquiet and trouble, the grief and diffidence, which are the natural result of a sinful course of life, that the wise man declares, *Prov. 14. 14. When the backsliders in heart shall be filled with their own ways, a good man shall be satisfied from himself.* The good man looks into his breast, and there he finds a fair catalogue of powerful temptations conquered, of vicious inclinations suppressed, of graces daily improved; and thus, as the same wise man hath observed, *15. 15. A good conscience is to him a continual feast.* It makes glad the heart, it gives a chearful countenance and diffuses an alacrity through the whole man: It smooths the rugged paths of this world, and sweetens the bitter cup of affliction. It so animates him that possesses it, that according to the Psalmist's expression, *He will not be afraid for any evil tidings, 112. 7.* And if distresses and troubles arise, he finds a safe retreat

SERM. retreat within his own breast: it gives him

I. an elevation of soul superior to the scornful reproof of the wealthy and the despitelness of the proud: In the worst instances of tyranny it secures to him an empire in himself, which is free and absolute, and out of the reach of the most inveterate malice. In all conditions of life, his rejoicing is this, the testimony of his conscience, *that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God he hath had his conversation in the world,* 2 Cor. 1. 12.

But secondly, we may consider this happy state of the righteous man's mind as heightened and improved by the comfortable reflexion on his having made God his friend.

In the Scriptures we read of this privilege which the righteous have above others, that they should not *fear*, because God was with them. Thus he said to *Isaac*, Gen. 26. 24. *I am the God of Abraham thy father, fear not, for I am with thee and will bless thee.* Abraham's faith was made perfect in love, and that love being sincere, was a shield and buckler to keep out fear; *for perfect love casteth out fear*, 1 John 4. 13. Affected with a just sense of the divine favour towards him, the royal Psalmist 27. 1. sings a song of courage to his soul: *The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Though an host should encamp*

The Power of Conscience.

15

encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though not an enemy, but war itself should rise against me, in this will I be confident. SERM.
I.

How can any man be discouraged at the enmity of the world, who is in a state of friendship with God? How can he sink under the load of scorn and obloquy which his virtue meets with from envenomed tongues, when he is assured of the approbation of him, who remembers how he hath walked before him in truth and with a perfect heart, and hath done that which is good in his sight?

Is. 38. 3. What motives can tempt him to cast away his confidence in the father of mercies and the God of all comfort; to *fall* away from a chearful reliance upon that *goodness* which God hath laid up for them that fear him, which he hath wrought for them who trust in him, *Psal. 31. 21.* upon that power, which alone is able to support his servants in all dangers, and carry them through all temptations; upon that truth, which hath declared to the righteous, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee? Heb. 13. 5.*

Every upright and sincere Christian may boldly say with *St. Paul, 2 Tim. 1. 12.* *I know whom I have believed;* and in the strength of such religious, well-grounded confidence towards God, he perseveres in his duty with steadiness and resolution, *in nothing terrified by his adversaries, Phil. 1. 28.* And tho' the afflictions of the world encircle him, tho' the

S E R M. the powers of darkness assault him, yet being

I. fully persuaded, *that greater is he that is with him, than they that are against him, he commits the keeping of his soul to God in well-doing, as unto a faithful creator, 1 Pet. 4. 19.*

Thirdly, We may consider the boldness of the righteous as much more heightened and augmented by a prospect of eternal happiness in the other world. This hath been always the object of his desires, the center of his hopes, and the scope of his actions. When therefore his conscience bears him witness, that he hath sincerely endeavoured to approve himself to his great Master by running the way of his commandments, he trusts that through the merits of his blessed Saviour and Redeemer he shall be made partaker of those unspeakable rewards, which God hath promised to the faithful. As therefore he hath great comfort in reviewing what he hath done, he hath still greater in looking forward on what he is to enjoy, a state of glory, an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Actuated and encouraged by these hopes full of immortality, he is *stedfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as he knows, that his labour is not in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. 15. 58.* He pierces through the clouds of affliction with an eye of faith: and lastly, when his departure is at hand, he takes leave of this world with resignation
and

and satisfaction: His soul is easy and undisturbed, as calm and serene as those blissful regions to which it is taking its flight; and death itself, which to the unrepenting sinner is a dreadful king of terrors, is to him a friendly guide to a blessed eternity. S E R M. I.

Having thus considered the nature and grounds of the fear of the wicked and the boldness of the righteous, I shall now deduce some suitable inferences with respect to both.

And first, since the wicked are surrounded with fears, and the righteous are bold as a lion, from hence it may be observed, that the distinction of moral good and evil does not depend upon the mere opinions or fancies of men, or upon any arbitrary constitution, or positive law, or the force of education, but is founded in the nature of the things themselves; and the consequences of virtue and vice being absolutely different from each other, the one being inseparably attended with remorse and dread and horror, the other with satisfaction and complacency, with peace and magnanimity, there is and must be a real, essential, unchangeable difference between them. This is a truth so plain and evident, that the artificial sophistry of atheistical heads can by no means evade it, however they may presumptuously call good evil and evil good. As well may they put darkness for light, and light for darkness, sweet for bitter, and bitter for sweet,

C

and

S E R M. and bring the most irreconcilable inconsistencies to meet together.

I.  Secondly, Since the wicked flee when none pursueth, since wickedness, as is observed of it in the book of wisdom, 17. 11. is very timorous, and being prest with conscience is always forecasting grievous things, from hence may be inferred the obligation and necessity of all sinners using the proper means, whereby they may be happily recovered out of so deplorable a condition; whereby the causes of those disorders, which so terrify and confound their souls, may be removed, those spots washed away, and those stains cleared, which make them so loathsome to themselves: This is to be effected only by a serious and unfeigned repentance, by eschewing evil and doing good, by dying to sin and living to righteousness, by a future sincere and universal conformity in their designs and actions to the will of God. Therefore, as it is advised in the book of Job 11. 13, 14, &c. *If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles: for then thou shalt lift up thy face without spot, yea, thou shalt be stedfast and shalt not fear: because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away: And thine age shall be clearer than the noon-day: thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning; and thou shalt be secure, because there is hope; yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt*

shalt take thy rest in safety: also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid. SERM. I.

Thirdly and lastly, Since the righteous are animated with boldness and courage, it infinitely imports them still to preserve their consciences unblameable, still to be sincere and without offence, and to pursue the heroick resolution of *Job*, 27. 5, 6. *Till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me; my righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me, as long as I live.* It is not more their duty, than their prudence and interest, their wisdom and happiness, to continue faithful to the end in the fear of God, and the uniform practice of righteousness; of that righteousness, which sets them free from the insupportable tyranny of passion and lust, and from the anxieties and terrors of a wounded spirit; that righteousness, which entitles them to a constant and permanent joy and peace of mind, and the exultations and triumphs of a good conscience; that righteousness, which unites them with that most beneficent Being, *in whose favour is life*, *Psal.* 30. 5. *Whose loving-kindness is better than the life itself*, *Psal.* 63. 4. In a word, that righteousness, which assures to them an almighty power for their defence, providence for their guide, and mercy for their comfort in *this* world, and in the next, heaven for their inheritance, and the beatifick vision of God himself for their exceeding great reward.



S E R M O N II.

The Nature and Extent of the
Gospel Morality.

Preached before the KING, July 17, 1726.

P H I L I P. iv. 8.

*Finally, Brethren, whatsoever things are true,
whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things
are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatso-
ever things are lovely, whatsoever things are
of good report, if there be any virtue, if there
be any praise, think on these things.*

S E R M.
II.



THE Gospel having been received amongst the *Philippians* through the successful labours of *St. Paul* now in bonds at *Rome*, but still sollicitous for their spiritual welfare, he writes to them this epistle by *Epaphroditus* their Bishop, whom they had sent to him to minister to his wants; wherein

wherein he sets himself to confirm them SERM.
in the faith which they had embraced, II.
to prevent their apostasie and falling from
the truth, to dissuade them from schisms and
divisions; wherein he affectionately intreats
and earnestly conjures them to fulfil his joy
by their becoming like-minded, by banishing
from amongst them strife and vain-glory,
by forming their lives upon the plan of that
illustrious pattern which Christ had exhibit-
ed to them; and particularly cautions them
against the heresies of the *Judaizers*, of
whom, notwithstanding all their vain boasts
and outward pretences, he declares even
weeping, that they are in reality the enemies
of the cross of Christ.

Having thus endeavoured to strengthen
the faith of his beloved *Philippians*, having
likewise armed them against the persecutions
that might stagger it, and against the adver-
saries that might assault it, he concludes his
exhortations with giving them a summary
view of the speculative and practical parts of
Christianity, the substance of all that he
their Apostle could teach, or they his Con-
verts should learn.

*Finally, Brethren, whatsoever things are true,
whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things
are just, whatsoever things are pure, what-
soever things are lovely, whatsoever things are
of good report, if there be any virtue, if there
be any praise, think on these things.*

SERM. In my following discourse I propose to

II. consider and enforce the several parts of the
 { Apostle's directions in the order wherein
 they lie before us; the first branch of which
 is, *Whatsoever things are true, think on these
 things.*

The truths that are recommended in this comprehensive apostolical precept, are those of the *Christian* Religion, the truths of that Gospel, the founder and publisher of which was the essential wisdom and word of God, even Truth itself. The blessed *Jesus*, the eternal son of the eternal father, came down from heaven to call mankind out of darkness into his marvellous light, to teach men the way of God more perfectly, and to make a clear revelation of that life and immortality, which was not before so certainly revealed. The scene of his life and actions was not amongst rude and illiterate Barbarians, whose ignorance and stupidity might make them liable to be cheated and imposed upon, but at *Jerusalem*, in the land of *Judæa*, and at a time when the *Jews* were forced to admit all other nations to mingle with them, by being made a province of the *Roman* empire. * There he fully declared the ultimate will and mind of God concerning the way and method of salvation, and confirmed the truth of what he had declared by such miraculous works, as irrefragably proved the
 divinity

* Dr. *Prideaux's* letter to the *Deists*.

divinity of his mission. After his ascension S E R M.
into heaven, his disciples, whom he com- II.
missioned to carry on that great work which
he had begun, and who were enabled to
discharge their office by the power of the
Holy Ghost, did not confine their preaching
of those divine truths, which their Master
had delivered to them, to *Judæa* only, but
propagated them throughout all parts of
the world: their sound went into all lands,
and their voice unto the ends of the earth.

So perfect and unblemished was the doctrine they taught, that it stood the test of the most curious examination of the wisest philosophers and disputants of that age: so commanding was its force, that in the following ages the successors of the Apostles baffled the cunning sophistry of its most virulent opposers: So triumphant was its progress, that it made its way through all the violent methods which its most malicious persecutors took to stop it. In short, contrary to all human probability, the Gospel of Christ grew mightily and prevailed, thro' the all-powerful spirit of God working in the glorious company of the Apostles; the goodly fellowship of the Prophets carried it on by the soundness of their arguments and the bright example of their lives; and it continually received new strength and vigor from the noble army of Martyrs, who sealed its truths by their deaths.

SERM. From this brief view of the miraculous
II. propagation of the Gospel, we may collect
the infallible certainty of those momentous
truths which the Preachers of it delivered,
which could so effectually confound all
gainsayers, men famed for depth of learn-
ing, and uncommon acuteness in reasoning,
could triumph over such obstinacy of con-
tradiction, and come at last to be acknow-
ledged by the Holy Church throughout all
the world.

It is indeed too notorious, that there have
arisen some men, mighty pretenders to rea-
son, by whom the way of truth has been
evil spoken of. But if those disputers of
this world would shake off the strong, but
ill-grounded, prepossessions that have blind-
ed their minds; if these men, who inso-
lently appropriate to themselves the charac-
ter of thinking with freedom, would cease
to think with bondage, and fairly and coolly
examine and impartially consider the whole
Christian scheme laid down in the Gospel,
they would find it to be truly uniform and
consistent, every way worthy of God, every
way fit for the Son of God to reveal, and
the sons of men to receive; they would
find the unity, the spirituality of the Di-
vine Nature, the goodness and wisdom of
God, the creation of the world by his
power, the government of it by his provi-
dence, the immortality of the soul, the re-
surrection

surrection of the body, a final judgment, a day of retribution, of unchangeable blessedness to some, and everlasting misery to others, with other fundamental verities it requires assent to, so expressly declared, so clearly displayed, so firmly established, as that they must engage the attention and fix the belief of all reasonable minds, and put to silence the cavils of foolish men. They would find the practical truths of the Gospel entirely conformable to the natural notion of the Supreme Being, and in all points agreeable to the dictates of unbiaſſed reason: There the bounds of good and evil are set out and measured to us in the most adequate manner; there is inculcated whatsoever can conduce to the improvement of human nature, whatsoever tends to the happiness of man and the welfare of civil societies; there duty is elevated to its utmost pitch, is superſtructed not upon the loose sandy bottom which heathen morality built upon, of interest and fear, but upon the surer and more noble foundation of conscience and love; there is opened to us the delightful prospect, not of an earthly *Canaan*, not the affluence of wine and oil, the milk and honey of a wealthy land, which was promised to the *Jews*; but an exceeding and eternal weight of glory in the kingdom of heaven; an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, the pre-

S E R M.
II.

SERM. prevailing motive to and the certain reward of an uniform obedience and steadfast perseverance in the truths of the Gospel.

Since therefore Christianity exhibits to us such important and saving truths, it is our bounden duty to make them the subjects of our most serious meditation; to think on these things that are true, so as to beget in our minds a suitable veneration for them, a constant resolution to entertain them without reluctance and without reserve, and hold fast the profession of them without wavering; to contend for them with a godly christian zeal, and *in meekness instruct those who oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth*, 2 Tim. 2. 25. Lastly, To think on them, so as to quicken and animate our endeavours to live conformably to them; for the light of the Gospel instructs not only to know, but to *do the truth*, 1 Job. 1. 6. not only to make us wiser, but *better men*. When therefore we *give all diligence to add to our faith virtue*, when instead of *holding the truth in unrighteousness*, we *obey it*, 1 Pet. 1. 22. *in our lives*, then do we answer the end of our christian profession; then do we give the most effectual proof, the strongest evidence of the sincerity of our belief.

Thus

Thus far have I spoken of the interest SERM.
which Christianity has in truth. I proceed II.
now to the }

Second branch of the Apostle's directions,
Whatsoever things are honest, or, as the
word signifies, Whatsoever things are venera-
ble, comely or grave, think on these things.

The import of this precept is; that we
be not fond of any thing that is unseemly
and unbecoming our stations, and persons
and characters, and inconsistent with the
exact decency, the majestick simplicity, the
native gravity of Religion; that our whole
behaviour be guided and regulated by an
unaffected modesty, by such a proper, strict
sobriety of conversation, as naturally ren-
ders men venerable in the eyes of others,
and procures their reverence and esteem.

The institution of the Law in reference
to the Gospel is usually expressed under the
scheme of childhood, as the other is by
that of full and perfect age. To do light,
trivial, childish things may be allowed and
indulged in the time of nonage, but is be-
low the dignity and honour of a *man in*
Christ. At our Baptism we renounced the
poms and vanities of the world, no less
than carnal lusts, and covetous desires, and
the Devil and his works. Surely then who-
soever duly weighs the solemn and sacred
obligation of his baptismal vow, will by
no means suffer himself to be betrayed into
such

SERM. such a disregard to decency and fitness, as

II. meanly to stoop and abjectly submit to such low, disingenuous, unreputable actions, as must render him cheap and contemptible; such as are altogether unworthy of a *man* who is serious and considerate, and forms right notions of the dignity of human nature, but ought to be studiously declined by every wise and understanding Christian. Our most excellent Religion, though it enjoins humility, endures not meanness; it inspires cheerfulness, but will not suffer us to be frantick; it would have our *speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt*, Col. 4. 6. be wholesome, profitable, instructive, and governed by prudence; but it absolutely forbids all dissolute mirth, all scurrility, all *foolish talking and jestings, which are not convenient*, Eph. 5. 4. It would not have us be morose or sullen, nor yet ridiculous or vain.

3. Next to an irreproachable gravity in our deportment, is recommended an hearty love of right, an intimate regard to and care of justice: *Whatsoever things are just, think on these things*. Have an especial respect to truth, and sincerity, and equity in all your communications and intercourses with your neighbours; deceive them not by lying, nor over-reach them by fraud; injure not their reputations by detraction, nor their persons by violence, nor their estates by indirect dealings.

dealings. He then that takes advantage SERM.
 from his neighbour's weakness and credulity II.
 to ensnare and defraud him; he that grinds
 the face of the poor, that delights in op-
 pression; he that violates and betrays the
 trust deposited in his hands; he that *accepts*
the person of the wicked to overthrow the
righteous in judgment, Prov. 18. 5. he that
 takes oaths with mental reservations, that
 eludes the obligation of them by artful pre-
 varications; in short, he that in all his trans-
 actions with mankind throughout the whole
 circumference of business and occasion, does
 not that which is equal and right in opposi-
 tion to partiality, does not treat them with
 openness and plain-dealing in opposition to
 lying, hypocrisy and deceit, is strictly charge-
 able with the breach of this Apostolical pre-
 cept, and with a manifest contradiction to
 the positive and express declarations of all
 revealed Religion; nor only so, but with
 acting in defiance of the light of Nature,
 which, antecedently to Revelation, forbids
 injustice of any kind whatsoever, and requires
 an universal uprightness in our conversation
 and dealings.

As for those who have not practised such
 things as are just, but have done wrong to
 their neighbours either by word or deed,
 what will it profit them to have gained all
 their wicked ends, to have advanced their
 fortune and interest in the world by cheat-
 ing,

S E R M. ing, dissimulation, fraud, oppression, per-

II. jury, to have grown great by making others miserable, and thriven at the expence of their own consciences? For sure we are, that God is a lover of truth and justice, and therefore all *false* ways doth he utterly abhor. Though he may seem for a while to look unconcerned upon them that deal treacherously, yet shall they not escape; they are often made to feel the weight of his vengeance here, and at the great day of recompense he will assuredly come near to them to judgment, and *will be a swift witness against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, Mal. 3. 5.*

How securely soever the griping extortioner may intrench and fortify himself in his unjust acquisitions, yet can he not be safe from the stings and lashes of a guilty conscience; his heart will burn within him, will reproach and condemn him as often as he reflects on the unhappy objects of his injustice, when he sees those tears which he hath caused, when he hears the mournful voice of the oppressed cursing him in the bitter anguish of their souls. But how will he be disquieted and confounded when his own heart suggests to him, that their *cries have pierced the clouds, and are entred into the ears of God, Jam. 5. 4.* when he considers that *for these things God will bring him into*

into judgment; that there will be a time S E R M.
when all his tricking arts shall fail, when II.
he will find that he has in the issue been most
unjust to his own soul, and by a fatally dex-
trous management has cheated himself into
an eternal state of misery!

In how different a light does the just and upright man appear, he that hath used no deceit in his tongue, nor done evil to his neighbour, nor taken reward against the innocent! The mournful complaints of distressed Orphans and Widows may raise his pity, and excite his charity, but can never reproach him as the cause of them.

With what solid satisfaction and complacency does he review his past life! with what chearfulness does he vindicate his integrity and uprightness in the words of the Prophet Samuel! *Whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I done wrong to? or whom have I hurt? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind my eyes therewith?* 1 Sam. 12. 3. Therefore because he hath loved righteousness and hated iniquity, because he hath banished from his heart all fraudulent and hurtful dissimulation, and hath done those things which are lawful and right in that state of life to which it pleased God to call him, with humble confidence he relies upon the gracious promise of God, who hath declared, that *who so doth these things shall never fall.*

Fourthly,

SERM. Fourthly, Our most holy Religion, as it

II.  exacts an universal justice, so it requires an equal purity from its votaries, such a one as every where confesseth its great author, the chaste Son of a Virgin-Mother, *Whatsoever things are pure, think on these things.*

Dearly beloved, (saith St. Peter, 1 Pet. 2. 11.) I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. It is a necessary part of christian duty, that we abstain from all sorts of filthiness and uncleanness whatsoever; from impure actions, which deface the image of God impressed upon the soul, and defile the body, which is the temple of the Holy Ghost; from loose wanton discourse, which directly tends to corrupt the heart; that with indignation and abhorrence we banish from our minds all impure thoughts, lest by giving way to them we suffer them to gain upon and captivate our affections, and our words and actions become as criminal as our desires; lest we at length be judicially given up to work all manner of uncleanness with greediness, and displease that pure Being who hath *not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness, 1 Thes. 4. 7.* We Christians are the candidates of heaven, that region of purity where flesh and blood, where unclean things cannot enter, and where consequently we cannot hope to see the face of God, unless we be qualified for it by cleansing
ing

ing ourselves from all filthiness, both of flesh S E R M. I.
and spirit, 2 Cor. 7. 1. and purifying our- II.
selves as God is pure, 1 John 3. 3.

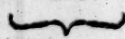
But although our holy calling stands in express opposition to lust, it does not so to love; and therefore,

Fifthly, *whatsoever things are lovely, think on these things* ——— whatsoever things can endear us to mankind, a fair address, a meek and humble temper, a diffusive benevolence, an universal candor, a regular and uninterrupted practice of all social virtues. He that conforms himself to this rule, is always courteous, easy and affable: He is always submissive and respectful to his superiors, friendly and peaceable amongst his equals, and chearfully condescends to men of low estate: He makes not the needy eyes to wait long; he makes not the hungry soul sorrowful, neither vexes he a man in his necessity: He turns not aside his eyes in anger from the poor, and gives him no occasion to speak evil of him: He not only embraces but seeks opportunities of doing good, of doing it, where he can hope for no return; and that he may be liberal in all things, he bestows not benefits only, but pardons too: Amidst repeated provocations, his kind and merciful disposition is not exhausted in the seventh trial, but goes on to seventy times seven: He heaps coals of fire upon his adversaries heads, not to consume them, but to melt

D

them

S E R M. them gently down into love and good temper, and make them be at peace with him.

II.  It is a false suggestion to say, that Christianity makes men sour, and austere, and unfociable; that temper of the Pharisee we know was never set us for a pattern: *Learn of me*, says our Lord, *for I am meek and lowly in heart*, Matt. 11. 29. The example we are to regulate the whole course of our actions by, is that of the blessed *Jesus*, who went about doing good, who loved, who cured, who blessed, who died for his enemies, whose whole life was one continued scene of goodness, beneficence, friendship, charity, and whatsoever is lovely, and whose death was the height and perfection of it.

Sixthly, The next thing recommended in the text, is the pursuit of such things as are of good report. We are not to be satisfied barely with doing our duty, so as to be approved of God and our own consciences, but we must withal be concerned for the success, the repute and the credit of religion; not only with unwearied diligence move in the paths of virtue, like the sun, which rejoiceth as a Giant to run his course, but like it too shine forth with a bright lustre. If any thing be of ill report, and likely to cast the least blemish upon our high and holy vocation, it is strictly incumbent on us, that we be jealous over ourselves with a godly jealousy in reference to it; that we allow
not

not ourselves the liberty of saying or doingS E R M. any thing, that approaches near the confines II. of vice and sin ; lest we thereby minister occasion of offence to the weak, and of triumph to the unbelievers, and the name of God and the profession of Religion through us be dishonoured. St. Paul, 1 *Theff.* 5. 22. exhorts to abstain from all appearance of evil ; to avoid scandal as well as sin ; not only to be free from guilt, but also from the very suspicion of it. This is the way to set our Religion out to the best advantage: this is the way to adorn the doctrine of Christ in ourselves, and make it be admired, beloved, approved, embraced and persevered in by others.

Of virtue says the author of the book of Wisdom, 4. 2. *where it is present, men take example thereat.* An open, visible, irreprehensible holiness of conversation has a winning, attractive and assimilating efficacy; the bright patterns of temperate, chaste, just and charitable men will kindle and cherish a generous emulation in the breasts of those who observe them ; they will follow the steps of such useful guides with alacrity and chearfulness, go on from strength to strength, from one degree of virtue to another, till at length all the amiable and excellent qualities which they behold in their actions, will be effectually transcribed into their own.

SERM. For this end is the Apostle's injunction to
 II. *the Philippians, 2. 15. Be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom shine ye as lights in the world.* Agreeable to which is our Lord's command, *Matt. 5. 16. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven.*

Happy they, who moving in high spheres, and as a city set on an hill, exposed to the view of all around them, support the reputation and promote the service of religion, by being illustrious patterns of good works. How amiable and graceful will they appear in the eyes of men! how honourable in their generations, and how well reported of in their times, *Ecclus. 44. 7. As ornaments to virtue, and blessings to mankind!* how precious in the account of almighty God, when at the resurrection of the just they shall be attended into heaven by a goodly train of followers, whom their example and interest had drawn from vice, and led into the paths of righteousness! How exceeding weighty will their crown of glory be, whom all their Dependents shall joyfully acknowledge in due subserviency to God's grace and mercy, to have been the happy instruments of *their* salvation!

To this affectionate exhortation of the Apostle, to think on *whatsoever things are of good*

good report, is subjoined, if there be any vir- S E R M.
tue, if there be any praise; that is, whatso- II.
ever things besides those recited in the fore-
going catalogue, are matter of Christian duty,
are beautiful and honourable, good and
praise-worthy, propose them to yourselves
as the pitch to which you must aspire, con-
stantly meditate upon them, and give your-
selves wholly to them.

And now what can with-hold us from
contemplating such fair and agreeable ob-
jects, which are here offered to our view;
or from having the highest esteem for the
revelation of the gospel, which engages us
in the pursuit of such excellent things,
which if we know we must admire, if we
consider we must love, and if, as the Apo-
stle earnestly intreats and conjures us, we
think on, we must practise.

But yet it is too obvious a remark, that
many are in so deplorable a state, that they
know not how to *think*. A great part of
mankind have no taste of sober things, have
not so much as a serious and rational reflec-
tion about them; but give themselves up to
sensual gratifications, foolishly imagining,
that man hath no better thing under the sun,
than to eat and to drink and to be merry,
Eccles. 8. 15. as if God brought them into
the world for no other end and purpose, but
to take their pastime therein, and to make
provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts

SER. M. thereof, *Rom. 13. 14.* How fondly do they

II. embrace every temptation that offers itself!
 how eagerly pursue what tends to their ruin,
*as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not
 that it is for his life!* *Prov. 7. 23.*

This fatal miscarriage is usually and justly imputed to the want of early institution in the principles of Religion. For had the tender years been timely prepossessed and seasoned with a reverential fear of God and hatred of sin, with the terrors of eternal judgment and the hopes of heaven; had these been enforced and inculcated upon the mind, and made to grow with the man through all the stages of life, it is not imaginable, that in despite of conscience and conviction, mens lives would be a continued state of enmity against God and goodness, reason and religion.

But further yet; men are not only through want of education and principles brought to that wretched pass, that they know not *how* to think upon their duty, but withal they have not courage to attend to it, they dare not think upon it: they cannot bear the reproaches of their consciences calling to remembrance their omissions of duty, their violations of it, and upbraiding their inconsiderateness, their folly and their madness. *They hate the light, neither come to the light, lest their deeds should be reprov'd,* *John 3. 20.* What pains do they take to keep at the utmost

most distance all thoughts of God and Reli-S E R M.
gion, which if they were allowed to gain II.
access to them, would be sure to check
the gaiety of their hearts, damp their joys,
and imbitter the pleasures of sin! And when-
soever such thoughts present themselves to
their minds, (as at some seasons they will
not fail to do) how are they shocked with
the surprize, how uneasy till they have dis-
missed the bold unwelcome intruders, and
how glad at their departure! Lastly, how
do they study to persuade themselves into
a disbelief of a future life, that they may
not be disturbed in a full enjoyment of the
present!

Of what mighty consequence is it to such
thoughtless, self-deluding sinners, to awake
out of sleep, to remember and shew them-
selves men, *I/. 46. 8.* and exert with vigour
those secret powers and faculties, which
God implanted in their breasts, to those ex-
cellent purposes for which He designed them;
to bend their utmost efforts, that they may
break the chains of their sins wherewith
they are tied and bound, and be delivered
from the mazes of error and misery, wherein
they are lost and bewildered. Let them re-
nounce all their darling lusts, which have
too long had dominion over them, and
blinded their eyes, that they might not see
the things that belong to their peace. Hi-
therto they have spent their time in vanity

S E R M. and ungodliness; let them from hencefor-

II. ward resolve to employ it in close and frequent meditations upon the important concerns of religion; in familiarizing to their minds those objects to which they have been such unhappy strangers; that they may become intimately acquainted with truth, with justice, with purity, with whatsoever things are virtuous, amiable and praise-worthy.

And to their meditations let them constantly add their most fervent prayers and supplications to the blessed spirit of God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed, and beseech him to dispose their hearts to think on these things seriously, to incline their affections to love them exceedingly, and engage their wills to cleave to them continually; that these things being in them and abounding, they may be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, 2 Pet. 1. 8. *That being made free from sin and become servants to God, they may have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life*, Rom. 6. 22.





S E R M O N III.

The wisdom of early seeking the
Kingdom of God and his
Righteousness.

MATTH. vi. 36.

*But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and
his Righteousness, and all these things shall
be added unto you.*



THE great corruption and degeneracy of our nature is in nothing more observable than in S E R M. III.
this, that we are blind to our truest interest, prompted by a fatal error most passionately to love, and most eagerly to pursue those things which have really the least title to our affections towards them, or our endeavours after them; and are utterly negligent and careless of, or at least not so solicitous as we should be about what concerns us most.

To

SERM. To set us right in a matter of so great

III. moment, our Blessed Lord in the words of
 the text, which are part of his sermon on
 the Mount, and more particularly the conclusion of his most excellent Dissuasive against anxious, worldly care, exhorts us to have a regard to those objects that most deserve it, to heaven and heavenly things, and not to suffer our souls to sink too deep into the love of any *earthly* good. In order to this he first proposes the end to be sought, *the Kingdom of God*; then the means whereby that end is to be attained, *his Righteousness*; and to these he annexes a promise of all the necessary things of this life, *and all these things shall be added unto you*.

The words consisting of a Precept and a Promise, I shall

First, consider the Precept, in which are contained these particulars:

The Object to be sought, *the Kingdom of God*:

The Circumstance, *seek it first*: And

The means, *his Righteousness*.

First, The Object to be sought is *the Kingdom of God*.

Not to detain you with the several significations of this phrase in scripture, I shall only observe, that in this place it seems peculiarly to mean the Kingdom of Glory, wherein

wherein almighty God has laid up crowns S E R M.
and scepters for his chosen; that Kingdom, III.
where no tyrant's power grinds and devours
the subject, but God himself with a gra-
cious hand governs his happy people; that
Kingdom, which no enemy invades, nor
time, nor age can put a period to.

And surely no man is so little a friend to
himself, as not to think *this* Kingdom
worth seeking; none so madly doting on
his present vain pursuits, but his Conscience
must, with sharp reproaches and rebukes,
check and restrain him with the thought of
the much greater wisdom of seeking it;
none so wholly abandoned to folly, but de-
sires to die the death of the *righteous* for
whom this Kingdom is prepared, and to
have his latter end like *his*; none so supine-
ly negligent, but when the Bridegroom
comes, and the doors are shutting, in all
haste runs to seek for oil to his lamp, and
earnestly knocks, and importunately calls,
Lord, Lord, open unto me.

Thus then we see the Duty is so very rea-
sonable, that sooner or later, one time or
other *all* men think fit to set about it. But
it must be observed, that *any* kind of seek-
ing will not serve the turn; it must be a
forward *early* search, the very *first* thing
we undertake. *Seek ye first the Kingdom of
God.* And indeed, good reason is there for
so doing; unless we think it fit, that a busi-
ness

SERMONS of such weight and moment as this

III. appears to be, should be put off to we know not what leisure time, which none can promise himself that it will ever come; or unless we conceive it wisdom to design that time for our seeking, which, if it ever should come, we may not be capable of attending to the meanest trifle: When decrepit age has brought us to the very edge of the grave, *then* to take in hand a new and great design, *then* to begin a search after the Kingdom of God, it is so unreasonable, that nothing can be *more* so. And indeed notwithstanding a real search is in some sort made by us, yet since we are altogether compelled to it by the extremity that then lies upon us, all hopes of the present world deserting us, it is no *moral* act of ours: We do not then *go* to God, but are driven to him: And if this *late, forced* seeking be upon the whole matter next to *none*, it will be no wonder that it proves *unsuccessful*.

But farther yet; when we are commanded to seek *first* the Kingdom of God, we are to know it should be *first*, not only in order of *time*, but in our *value* and *esteem*. For if it be *otherwise*, it is manifest that we do *not* seek at all. For the several interests of flesh and spirit crossing one another, it is impossible to pursue and seek for *both*. So that whosoever should *equally* love
both,

both, if such a state could ever happen, must S E R M.
be under a necessity of desisting from all III.
performance, till his affections be inclined
to *one* side, rather than the *other*, and then
by *chusing* the one, he evidently *disclaims*
the other, which before was pretended to be
in as high esteem, as *that* which is *chosen*.

The kingdom of God then is to be sought
with an *undivided* affection, with *all* our
heart: Our souls must be *entirely fixed* upon
God, satisfied with nothing else, but that
supreme, eternal Good, must think of, de-
light in, desire nothing in competition with
Heaven.

But we must be extremely careful not to
rest here; we are not only to seek the king-
dom of God with our *whole* heart, but with
all our *strength* too, not only with inflamed
desires *long* after it, but also *labour* for it,
working out our salvation, and discharging
according to our respective abilities those
duties which are the prescribed conditions
of attaining the end of our hope. Do we
then really *desire* to be made partakers of the
heavenly kingdom? Let us make our desires
visible in our *actions*. Without labour and
the sweat of his brows man is not to reap
the fruits of the *earth*; and can he expect
without any motion of his own to be lifted
up to *heaven*, for which our blessed Lord
assures us, there is a kind of holy *violence*
to be used?

Observe

SERM. Observe what pains the men of this world
 III. take to compass their several designs: Ob-
 serve the ambitious man, how vigorously,
 with what unwearied application he pur-
 sues the schemes he has projected for his
 own advancement; the covetous, how he
 rises up early, and sits up late, and eats the
 bread of carefulness to increase his stores.
 Do men take such excessive pains in the pur-
 suit of *earthly* goods, and is it probable,
 that *heavenly* things should come unsought?

Seek ye then the Lord and his kingdom,
 seek his face evermore, Psal. 105. 4. Let us
 lay aside all delay, all thought of *other* busi-
 ness; let *heaven* be the object of our most
 intense contemplation, sincere love, and ar-
 dent wishes, the center of our hopes, and
 the scope of our actions; let the pursuit of
 it be our chiefest care, the principal con-
 cern of our lives; let *temporal* things be used
 by us only as instruments in order to the
 more effectual attainment of those that are
eternal: but if our desires are once termi-
 nated in the *Creatures*, we shall find them
 not *helps*, but *hindrances* to us; they will
 then clog our souls, and not suffer them to
 aspire towards heaven. When once the love
 of *them* has gained the ascendant over us, it
 will make us forget our Creator; it will
 make those things our *lords*, which were or-
 dained to be our *servants*; it will make us
 part with our interest in the *next* life for the
 sake

SAKE of *this*, give up our title to certain felicity in the one, for the precarious trifles of the other—A wretched exchange of an infinitely great and valuable good at some distance, for a small inconsiderable one near at hand!—an exchange, like that of an extravagant heir, who for a present supply of a little money, which is consumed almost as soon as received, sells the reversion of an estate, which in a course of a few years might become his own. S E R M. III.

I proceed now to the consideration of the *means*, whereby the kingdom of God is to be attained. Seek *his righteousness*; that is, we must not content ourselves with a superficial, or partial sanctity, but beyond *that*, endeavour, as much as our condition in this world is capable of it, to attain to the purity of Almighty God; that is, that high sanctity, which neither the light of nature, nor the injunctions of the Law could reach to, but which, that it may appear to be the righteousness of *God* indeed, has the whole blessed Trinity engaged in the dispensation of it, being vouchsafed and given to men by God the Father, taught and preached to them by God the Son, and lastly wrought and formed within them by God the Holy Ghost, which is no less a matter, than according to the language of Scripture, *to have Christ dwell in our hearts*, Gal. 3. 17. *to walk worthy of Christ*, Col. 1. 10. *to put on the Lord*

SERM. *Lord Jesus*, Rom. 13. 14. strictly and carefully to observe all the commands of the Gospel, even those hard sayings which are contrary to flesh and blood; and lastly, *to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect*, Matt. 5. 48. nay, as St. Peter says, 1. 1. 4. *to be partakers of a divine nature*.

Some indeed there are, who would be more willing to seek the kingdom of God some *other* way, as by *faith*, and mere *outward* profession, and to have *that* accounted as sufficient; but as for evangelical righteousness, that is a task too troublesome to be undertaken. But let us take heed that we do not deceive ourselves; if ever we hope to find the kingdom of God, we must seek it in the way he has prescribed, the way of his righteousness. *For without holiness no man shall see the Lord*, and without it, we can lay no claim to the promise of the text, of having all these things added to us.

In this promise is contained this proposition, that they who truly serve God shall want nothing; and the consequence flowing from thence is, that they ought not to be too *careful* about the things of *this* life.

For the first; we may find in the 28th chapter of *Deuteronomy* from the 1st to the 14th verse, a large catalogue of *temporal* blessings, that wait upon those who serve God faithfully upon earth. And we are expressly assured by St. Paul, 1 Tim. 4. 8. *That godliness*

godliness is profitable unto all things, having S E R M.
promise of the life that now is, and of that III.
which is to come.

Man being composed of soul and body, as *that* expects the spiritual influence of *grace* from *heaven*, so doth *this* a proportionable *sustenance* upon *earth*. It is fit that both should be supported to make him capable of doing due and bounden service to his Maker and Preserver. Accordingly when we pray that God's name may be hallowed, and his will may be done upon earth, as it is in heaven, we immediately subjoin, Give us this day our daily bread.

If our heavenly Father gives his *grace* to our *souls*, will he not give *food* to our *bodies*? Can it be thought, that he who bestows the *greater*, will deny us the *lesser* blessings? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

When therefore we feel any doubts arising within us, any suspicions what may become of us here, let us call to mind, *who* it was that formed us in the womb, that cloathed us with skin and flesh, and fenced us with bones and sinews, and granted us life and favour, *Job* 10. 11. *Who* it was that protected us yet hanging upon our mothers breasts, that succoured us in the weak state of infancy, and carried us through the many years of childhood. Have we passed through

E

numberless

SERM. numberless difficulties, and that at an age,

III. when we were by no means able to help ourselves? And can we *now* despair, when we are furnished with so many *abilities* to struggle with the world, and *fortified* with the experience of so constant and wonderful preservations? Certainly we cannot but acknowledge, that it was the good providence of God that sustained us hitherto; why should we then doubt of the *continuance* of his goodness? He that hath provided for us in our *weak* estate, can he not provide for us *now*, when we are in *full strength* and *vigour*? Or admit, that we are *infirm*, or *aged*; yet consider, that we are not *more* infirm, than when we were *new* born, and then we *were* provided for.

If it be pretended, that it is not for *ourselves* that we are careful, but for our *families*, a great charge of *poor infants*; upon due consideration we shall lay aside that *vain* excuse. For were not *we* once *children* ourselves? as weak and helpless as they are *now*? and has not God preserved *us* hitherto? And is not the same God *their* God as well as *ours*? He that out of a rude mass of blood hath made a perfect body, and given that fabrick *life*, will he not sustain that life with food? Will he not cloath that body with raiment? *For is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?* This is our Lord's own argument, *Matt. 6. 25.*

Is there any Artificer in the world, who S E R M.
when he has perfected a curious piece of III.
work, will suffer it to be spoiled, or in-
jured? We are the *workmanship of God*; and
we may assure ourselves, that *He* will not
be less regardful of his own creatures, than
men are of the labours of their hands.

Again; we scarce see any master so hard
to his servants, as not to provide them food;
and no servant is so foolishly suspicious, as
to fear the want of it. *We* are the servants
of Almighty God, as good a Master sure as
any *earthly* one; and can we think that *He*
will use towards *us* that treatment which we
do not fear from the *worst men*?

Further; is there any *Father*, that will
suffer his *child* to *perish*, whilst he is able to
relieve him? *If his son ask bread, will he*
give him a stone, or, if he ask a fish, will
he give him a scorpion? as our Saviour ex-
postulates, *Matt. 7. 9, 10.* Now every *Chri-*
stian is the child of God. *If ye then, being*
evil, know how to give good gifts unto your
children, how much more, as he argues at
verse 11. *shall your heavenly Father give good*
things to them that ask him? It would be
no great wonder, if the *Gentiles*, who have
not these assurances, should be anxiously so-
licitous after earthly things, as we are told
Matt. 6. 32. but for *us Christians* to be so,
would be unpardonable *infidelity*.

SERM. Do we believe that, when we have lain
 III. in the grave, and our corrupted bodies are
 ~~~~~ lost in scattered dust, the Almighty will call  
 together our divided ashes, that our dry  
 bones shall live, and be cloathed again with  
 skin and flesh? Do we believe this mighty  
 miracle? and do we fear, that he will not  
 supply our present wants, which requires  
 no miracle at all? Or,

Do we believe, that God after *this* life,  
 will bring us to *another* of infinite joy and  
 happiness, and *that* to last for ever; and do  
 we fear, that he will not support us, during  
 our short pilgrimage upon *earth*? That he  
 will give us a crown of *glory*, and will not  
*now* afford us *food and raiment*? If we be-  
 lieve the *one*, and not the *other*, there is no  
 creature in the earth, but will rise up in  
 judgment against us, and condemn our  
 wretched incredulity. Behold the fowls of  
 the air, says our Lord, *Matt. 6. 26. for they*  
*sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into*  
*barns, yet your heavenly father feedeth them:*  
 And I know, we are not guilty of so mean  
 a thought of ourselves, as not to believe  
 that we are much better than they. And  
 shall not God, who thus takes care of *them*  
 for the sake of *man*, have an equal regard  
 to man for his own? Shall man, who was  
 made for the service of his Maker, fare  
 worse than *these*, that were ordained for the  
 service of men?

Consider

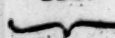
Consider the most imperfect creatures, the S E R M.  
fading grafs; the lilies of the field, how III.  
they grow, they toil not, neither do they  
spin; yet their beauty furpaffes the gaiety  
of the greateft Princes; *for even Solomon in  
all his glory was not arrayed like one of thefe;*  
as our Saviour has told us at the 28th and  
29th verfes of the fame chapter. And if,  
as he argues at the 30th verfe, *God fo cloath  
the grafs of the field, which to-day is, and to-  
morrow is caft into the oven, fhall he not much  
more cloath you, O ye of little faith?*

But here I would obferve, that by this  
declaration, that all thefe things fhall be  
added to them that feek the kingdom of God  
and his righteousnefs, it is not meant, that  
they fhall have *abundance*, or *excefs* of all  
things: God keeps his promife, if they,  
who expect happinefs in heaven, have but  
*enough* in their paffage to it; his giving *more*  
is an evidence of his bounty, which they  
cannot challenge; he promifes to fupply  
their neceffities, not to make them wanton  
with *superfluities*. *Thefe* he often in mercy  
*denies* to them, as being neither for their  
good, nor for his own glory, but too fre-  
quently the matter of *fin*.

It is then fufficient, it is a great happinefs  
too, that God adds to his fervants the things  
of *this* life in fuch meafures and propor-  
tions, as may not hinder, nor retard them  
in their purfuit of the things of the *next*;



S E R M. that he bestows them according to the exi-

III.  gence of their condition, and in order to the furtherance of their salvation. If at any time it is his pleasure to *withhold* good things from them, this is no argument of his *disregard* to them; *for whom the Lord loveth he chastneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*, Heb. 12. 6. *He chastneth them that they should not be condemned with the world*, 1 Cor. 11. 32. In all their necessities he upholdeth them with patience, and endueth them with contentment, so that they bear the pressure with *even* minds, and chearful *resignation* to his will, being fully persuaded, *that a little, which the righteous hath, is better than great riches of the ungodly*, Psal. 37. 16. that God can chuse for them better than they can for themselves; that they have deserved to be in a *worse* condition than they are in at present, and that there is no state of life which affords not sufficient matter of praise and thankfulness to God.

From hence then it is evident, that the promise of the Text, *all these things shall be added unto you*, is made good by God's bestowing temporal blessings, though not *abundantly*, yet *sufficiently*; and, when he is pleased to remove some of them for our greater good, by substituting contentment in their room: the consequence arising from whence is,

That

That the servants of God ought not to be too careful about the things of *this* life. SERM.  
III.

There is a sollicitude, which is an act of *prudence*, and another of *diffidence*: That of *prudence* is, when a man wisely premeditates, and fairly provides for what is necessary. So far is the Scripture from disapproving *this*, that it *commends* it; yea, St. Paul, 1 Tim. 5. 8. judges him to be worse than an *Infidel*, that doth not practise it, by providing for his own house. It is *that*, which stirreth up our industry, and quickens our diligence in some honest, lawful calling; which restrains us from idleness and sloth, and from presuming unwarrantably upon God's providence; it is *that*, whereby, not *without* which, our Saviour promiseth an addition of all these things.

The *other* sollicitude is, when the mind is perplexed with dark distrusts, and troubled with the doubtful expectation of future events; when we do not refer the issue of things to God with an humble affiance; but rely more upon our *own care*, than *his providence*, depend more upon our *own industry*, than *his favour*, as if *that*, without his blessing upon our endeavours, could accomplish our desires. This is what St. Paul forbids the *Corinthians* 1. 7. 32. *I would have you without carefulness.*

Of this inordinate care we become guilty, when we set too high a value upon *this* world's

S E R M. world's goods, when through an unequal

III. estimation of them we prefer things transitory to eternal, earth to heaven; when we use *unlawful* means to compass them, pursuing our gain by fraudulent and collusive arts, by violence and oppression; when we *anxiously preserve* them, when neither the glory of God, nor the good of our Neighbour can draw from us *any part* of them; as if we ought not to trust in him for their *continuance*, who was the Bestower of them; or as if God who gave *them*, could not give us more.

Thus have I considered the precept contained in these words of the text, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness*, and the Promise in the subsequent ones, *And all these things shall be added unto you*.

What now remains, but that we instantly and heartily resolve to have the kingdom of God from henceforth in our view, and earnestly aspire towards it, and diligently seek it in the way of righteousness; that having faithfully discharged the duty, we may receive the reward, have all *these* things added to us, all things that are *necessary* to carry us through *this* world to a better. And

*May the good God, who is able to do, and doth also for us exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, enlarge our hearts to worthy apprehensions of his goodness,*



*ness, and incline them to a religious perform-  
ance of his Will, and make us stedfast, un-  
moveable, always abounding in the work of the*  
*Lord, forasmuch as we know, we have his*  
*word for it, who is Truth itself, the God of*  
*Truth hath promised, that our labour shall not*  
*be in vain in the Lord.*

SERM.  
III.



SERMON



The Example of our Saviour, an  
Inducement to submit to the  
Divine Will.

---

JOHN xviii. latter part of the 11th verse.

*The cup which my Father hath given me,  
shall I not drink it?*

SERM.  
IV.



OUR blessed Lord, whilst he abode upon earth, did not only deliver the wisest and most excellent institution of morals that the world hath been blessed with, but he also added to his doctrine the most lively pattern that ever it beheld. He is the *way*, as well as the *truth*; he shews us what is pure religion by what he *did*, as well as by what he *taught*, and recommends it to *our* practice by his *own*.

The examples of good and holy men are in Scripture frequently proposed to our imitation; but they being unavoidably subject to numberless failings and infirmities, and there  
being

being many *defects* in their *best* actions, we S E R M. may often fall into irregularities, and be IV. misled into transgressions by a too *close* and *exact* imitation of *them*: The rule therefore is, to copy after *them*, only so far as *they* were imitators of *Christ*. This is St. Paul's caution to the *Corinthians*, I. II. I. *Be ye followers of me, even as, or no farther than, I am of Christ*. But if we follow *Christ*, we follow an *unerring* guide; we cannot be deceived in forming our lives without limitation and without reserve upon that most *compleat* model, which he in his *own person* exhibited to us. 'Tis true indeed, that we *frail, sinful creatures* must necessarily fall very short of the *transcendent* excellency of the example *he* has set before us. But still it is our *bounden* duty to *aspire* after *such a resemblance* of the moral dispositions and actions of *his* life, as our *imperfect* nature is *capable* of; to have *always* before our eyes, and with *unwearied* steps press forward toward the mark of that *consummate* pattern, and go on to *perfection* in the constant exercise of all those virtues, which adorned the *whole* course of *his* life, and the imitation of which he in his holy Gospel requires of all those, who have devoted themselves to be taught and governed by him, and have taken his yoke upon them. Amongst *these*, none shone forth with more distinguished lustre, than his steadfast resolution



SERM. tion of *entire submission* to the will of God

IV. under the most *afflicting* circumstances, intimated in the words of the text, *The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*

The occasion of them was *this*. The traitor *Judas*, having received a band of men and officers from the chief Priests and Pharisees, came with them into the garden where Christ and his Disciples were, to apprehend him. *Simon Peter* seeing this, his spirit was immediately stirred within him; and he drew his sword in defence of his Master, and smote the high Priest's servant *Malchus*, and cut off his right ear. *Jesus* was so far from approving what his Disciple had done, that with some degree of indignation he rebuked his indiscreet unwarrantable zeal, and said to him, *Put up thy sword into the sheath*. The reason of this rebuke follows in the text, *The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?* The expression is figurative, importing his settled purpose to bear patiently and with absolute submission, what his heavenly Father had determined he should suffer.

The same submission to the will of God he expressed in his fervent prayer to him in the garden, *before Judas* came with an armed multitude to lay hands on him, and deliver him up to his implacable enemies; when being in an agony, and overwhelmed with

with such anguish of spirit, as caused him SERM.  
 to sweat great drops of blood falling to the IV.  
 ground, and foreseeing the barbarous usage,   
 the treachery, the scorn, the torments and  
 the death prepared to meet him, and the  
 terrors of the Lord set in array against him,  
 he fell on his face, and offered to God this  
 conditional request, *Matt. 26. 39. O my Fa-*  
*ther, if it be possible, let this cup pass from*  
*me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou*  
*wilt*; repeating the same words a second,  
 and a third time. By all the charms the  
 name of *Father* infoldeth, by all the engage-  
 ments which thy own tender bowels, or my  
 unblemished filial piety can present or lay  
 before thee, remove from me this cup, this  
 cup of trembling, this nauseous, poisonous,  
 deadly mixture. Yet if this request appears  
 too *much* to be granted, if it be not agree-  
 able to the counsel of *thy* will, I have *an-*  
*other* of a very *distant* nature, namely, that  
 it be *not* granted: I not only *acquiesce* in this  
 severe rigid dispensation, but make it my  
*ambition* and my *suit*; *thy* will, O God, in  
 its full latitude and compass, not *mine* be  
 done.

It was most certainly lawful for the in-  
 nocent *Jesus*, who had no sin of his *own*  
 to answer for, to pray, that an *undeserved*  
 calamity might be *removed* from him, and  
 as a *man* he could not but have a quick and  
 tender apprehension of approaching suffer-  
 ings,

SERM. ings, and be *averse* from them. And here  
 IV. it must be observed, that the whole mass and  
 { race of mankind being lost in guilt and  
 given up to ruin, the divine goodness found  
 an expedient to *relieve* them in this de-  
 plorable extremity, sending his only begotten  
 Son out of his bosom to become *man*, to be  
 our *surety*, our *ransom* and *atonement*: which  
 important office he *voluntarily* taking upon  
 himself, it now became *necessary* for *God*, not  
 to *retract* his purpose, or *release* our surety  
 without the *payment* of *that* debt, for which  
 he stood engaged. So that upon the whole  
 matter, it became the product of the deter-  
 minate counsel of God, that his only well-  
 beloved Son should be delivered up, and by  
 wicked hands be crucified and slain, be de-  
 spised and rejected of men, be a man of  
 sorrows and acquainted with grief, yea,  
 stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted; that  
 he should be wounded for our transgressions,  
 and bruised for our iniquities; that the cha-  
 stisement of our peace should be upon him,  
 and by his stripes we should be healed,  
*Isa. 53.* He therefore renounces his own  
*human* will, and submits to the *divine*, and  
 professeth himself ready to make a perfect  
 oblation to his Father for us men and for  
 our salvation.

Agreeable hereto is what the Author of  
 the Epistle to the *Hebrews* in the 10th chap-  
 ter, from the 40th *Psalms*, discourseth con-  
 cerning



cerning Christ. When he cometh into the world, he saith, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not*, that is, not of bulls and of goats, as we read in the foregoing words, *but a body hast thou prepared me*: (In the *Psalms* it is, *mine ears hast thou opened*, or *bored*; that is, not the *slave*, subjected to perpetual bondage by the known ceremony amongst the *Jews*, *Exod. 21. 6.* of having his ear bored through at his master's gate, is more addicted to the mere will and pleasure of his lord, than *I am ready* to perform the task incumbent on me for the redemption of mankind.) *In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure*; then said I, *lo, I come* (in the volume of the book it is written of me) *to do thy will, O God.*

Exactly suitable to this declaration was our Lord's whole behaviour. *He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth, Isa. 53. 7.* Leaving us a nexample, that we should follow his steps, *2 Pet. 2. 21.*

In this most perfect pattern of resignation to God, is our own duty represented to us; and if it hath a proper influence upon our minds, it will not fail to make us freely and sincerely offer up all our choices and desires to him, and leave ourselves no will but his; dispose us to a constant meek suffering  
of

SERM. of afflictions, whensoever he shall think fit  
 IV. to feed us with the bread of tears, and give  
 us plenteousness of tears to drink, *Psal. 80. 5.*  
 and with affection and from the heart to  
 cry out with our blessed Lord, *The cup which  
 my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*

In the remainder of this discourse, I propose to lay before you some few considerations, that are useful to convince men of the reasonableness of the duty of bearing afflictions with patience and resignation.

First, It will be of use to us to consider, *who* it is, that dispenseth to us the cup of bitterness? even *he*, who is the *sovereign Lord* of us, and *all things*, and is *absolutely free* in the exercise of his power, and doth whatsoever he pleaseth in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deep places, *Psal. 135. 6.*

*Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground, Job 5. 6.* They do not come upon the sons of men by blind *chance*, or fatal inflexible *necessity*. Nothing befalls mankind either *generally* or *specially* without the disposal of the *Supreme Being*, not only what is good, but what is evil; *adversity* as well as *prosperity*; and without *that*, not an *hair* of our heads falleth to the ground. This great and concerning truth he confirmeth to us by his own solemn testimony, *Isa. 45. 6, 7. I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light*

*light and create darkness: I make peace and* SERM.  
*create evil: I the Lord do all these things.* IV.

Were thunders and hail, pestilence, blasting, mildew, frogs, lice and locusts sent upon the land of *Egypt*? These sore judgments are expressly declared, *Exod.* 8. 19. to be inflicted by the finger of God, who uses *second causes* as instruments to execute his pleasure. And in the prophecy of *Joel*, 2. 25. the locust, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm are stiled *his* great army, which he sent among his own people. Did *Job* suffer loss in his cattle, was he plundered of his goods, bereaved of his children, deprived of health, smitten with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown? He acknowledged the hand of God to have been in every one of these evils that befell him. *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: Blessed be the name of the Lord,* *Job* 1. 21.

Hear the declaration of *Eli* to the Prophet *Samuel*, who brought him a dreadful message from God, that the iniquity of his house should not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good,* *1 Sam.* 3. 18. Hear what *David* did when he was under the pressure of affliction; *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth: why so? it immediately follows, because Thou didst it,* *Psal.* 39. 9. The same consideration sealed up the lips of

F

*Aaron,*



SERM. *Aaron*, when two of his own sons, *Nadab*  
 IV. and *Abihu*, for offering strange fire, were  
 consumed by the hand of the Lord. *Aaron*  
 held his peace, Lev. 10. 3. not through a sul-  
 len discontent, but with calm submission.

Whensoever therefore we meet with losses  
 and disappointments and troubles, it is suf-  
 ficient to content us, and compose our minds  
 into a suitable acquiescence, to reflect, that  
 it is *God's* uncontrollable will that it *should*  
 be so. *He* is the supreme proprietor and  
 dispenser of all blessings; if then at any  
 time he is pleased to *remove* any of them,  
 there is no just ground for impatient murmur-  
 ings and repinings: for he doth us no wrong;  
 he taketh back but his *own*; he manifesteth  
 hereby his unalienable right and dominion  
 over his creatures, and convinceth us of the  
 necessity of our dependence in all conditions  
 of life upon him, as the sole object of our  
 trust, whose kingdom ruleth over all, *Psal.*  
 103. 19.

Secondly, It will be of use to us to con-  
 sider, that afflictions are not merely proofs  
 of *God's* absolute *Sovereignty* over us, but  
 are also evidences of his *favourable* regard  
 to us.

Shall we conceive of *God*, that he is an  
*arbitrary tyrannical* Being, that wantonly  
*sports* himself with the distresses, and cruelly  
*delights* in the miseries of his reasonable crea-  
 tures, or *willingly afflicteth* and *grieveth* the  
 children

children of men? *Far* be from us such thoughts and apprehensions as these—so unworthy of, so injurious to the Divine Majesty, so evidently derogatory from the infinite goodness of his nature. *Whatsoever* befalls us, *all* is good, because *he* is so. He is our almighty and most merciful Father—a Father *more* affectionately inclined towards us, than earthly parents are to their own beloved Off-spring. *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee*, said God to the mournful Zion, when she had cried out in the bitterness of her soul, *The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me*, Is. 49. 14, 15. Many men are too apt to think themselves *forsaken* of God, when his hand lieth heavy upon them: but if they reasoned *aright*, they would conclude, that his chastisements are so far from being instances of his having *rejected and abandoned* them, that they are really on the *other* hand strong assurances of his *special care* over them; that although afflictions be, as the Prophet *Isaiab* 28. 21. with great propriety stiles them, *his strange work*, yet when he pleaseth to bring them upon us, it is done with *benevolent* intentions, and upon the most excellent grounds. For they are not laid upon us as the strict revenges of an angry judge, but the salutary corrections of a loving Father.

SERM. *ther.* This argument the Apostle, *Heb.* 12.

IV. 5, &c. maketh use of, amongst others, to exhort to patience in tribulations. Ye have forgotten the exhortation, or consolation, which speaketh unto you, as unto children; *My son, despise not thou the chastning of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chastneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastning, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he, whom the father chastneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all, that is, all sons, are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*

Besides the assurance of God's estimation of his servants as *sons*, when he corrects them, we have also that of his *moderation* of his corrections towards them, as a Father. He knoweth best *what kind* of discipline they stand in need of most, and will not lay *more* upon them than there is just cause for, and which he will graciously enable them to sustain. Agreeably hereto, *St. Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, 1. 10. 13. *There bath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man*, that is, you have not yet been exercised with any trial, but what is *human*, what the ordinary strength and resolution of human nature is able to bear. But God is faithful, that is, in case you should be tried with *severer* sufferings, yet you have the  
promise



promise of a faithful God for your support S E R M.  
 in *that* case, who will not suffer you to be IV.  
 tempted above that ye are *able*, but will  
 with the temptation also make a way to  
*escape*, that ye may be able to bear it.

It was God's promise to his chosen people groaning under the *Babylonish* yoke, *Jer.* 30. 11. *I am with thee to save thee; though I utterly destroy all the nations where I have scattered thee, yet will I not utterly destroy thee: but I will correct thee by judgment, and not utterly cut thee off.* Here by judgment is meant not only the *punishment*, but also the merciful *moderation* of it, or correcting in *measure*, *Is.* 27. 8. Therefore the same Prophet *Jeremiah* teacheth the people of God to pray, *Is.* 24. *O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.*

To this reflexion it may be added, that God never hath his *rod* to scourge his servants, but he hath at the same time his *staff* to support and hold them up; if he inflicts *crosses* upon them to *punish* them, he hath  *blessings* to comfort them; and the *judgments* which he sends to *affright* them, are proportionably accompanied with the kindly influences of his *mercy* to *refresh* them. As the sufferings of *Christ* abound in us, says *St. Paul* 2 *Cor.* 1. 5. so our consolation also aboundeth by *Christ*. For this reason, in the same *Epistle*, 4. 8. he declares, *We are trou-*

SERM. *bled on every side, but not dismayed; we are*  
 IV. *perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted,*  
 { *but not forsaken; cast down, but not de-*  
*stroyed.*

Thirdly, It will further be of use to us to consider *distinctly* some of the *good* and *beneficial ends* of Providence, in bringing men under the yoke of afflictions.

Sometimes they are sent to prevent them from falling into grievous sins, which otherwise they would unhappily plunge themselves into. Thus as we find, *Gen. 20.* when *Abimelech* king of *Gerar* sent and took *Sarah Abraham's* wife, believing her to be his sister, and was determined to commit adultery with her, God interposed between the purpose and commission of the sin, and inflicted a distemper upon him, and said to him in a dream by night, *behold, thou art but a dead man for the woman which thou hast taken, for she is a man's wife*, and withheld him from sinning against him, and suffered him not to touch her.

Sometimes they are sent to *lead* men to a just knowledge of themselves, to bring them to a sight and sense of their former sins, to make them seriously call their ways to remembrance, to examine themselves and their estate both toward God and man, and work in them humiliation, and contrition, and resolutions of amendment. *If they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction;*

*tion: then he sheweth them their work, and* SERM.  
*their transgressions that they have exceeded: IV.*  
*He openeth also their ear to discipline, and*  
*commandeth that they return from iniquity,*  
*Job 36. 8, 9, 10.*

Sometimes they are sent to withdraw our affections from *this* world, and make us aspire after our *heavenly* country.

If things were always to go on *smoothly* in *this* world, as water glides in a deep channel, without rufflings of boisterous winds, even the *best* men might sometimes be tempted to say in their hearts, It is *good* for us to be *here*. There are such strong attractives in an *uninterrupted* flow of *prosperity*, that they who are blessed with it are apt to think, that it will never be otherwise than *well* with them, that *to-morrow* and the *succeeding* time shall be as *this* day, and much more abundant. *This* the royal Psalmist acknowledgeth to have been his *own* case, *Psal. 30. 6.* *In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong.* But the scene was soon changed: for we find him immediately subjoining; *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.* He then became truly sensible, that it was in *vain* for him to build upon so *poor* a foundation as *temporal prosperity*, to flatter himself with the *fond* hopes of a *continued* enjoyment of *worldly* satisfactions.



SERM. Whensoever therefore men see the *uncer-*

IV. *tainty* of all human affairs, how their glory fades and their pomp vanishes, when they experimentally find *afflictions* succeed in the room of *prosperity*, they are the more easily induced to believe, that *such* a value is not to be set upon the things of *this* world, as to *justify*, or even *excuse* the excessive pains men *usually* take in order to obtain them; they will *easily* conclude, that *those* goods are not the *proper adequate objects* of their love, which are of such *short* continuance, and so *soon* pass away, and are gone; and being effectually convinced of their *emptiness*, and the *folly* of setting their *hearts* upon them, they will *naturally* be excited, with inflamed desires, to thirst after the enjoyments of the *other* and *better* world, with hopes full of immortality, and with zealous endeavours answerable to them, they will seek the kingdom of *God* and *his* righteousness, and during their pilgrimage upon *earth*, have their conversation in *heaven*, Phil. 3. 20. and so pass through things *temporal*, that they finally lose not the things *eternal*.

Sometimes God giveth sore travel to the sons of men, to be exercised therewith, Eccles. 1. 13. to enkindle and actuate their *devotion*, to make them pour forth their *supplications* before him, and cry mightily to him for succour. *I will go*, saith he by the Prophet *Hosea*, 5. 15. *I will go and return*

*to my place, till they acknowledge their offence* SERM.  
*and seek my face; in their affliction they will* IV.  
*seek me early.* This is declared by the Pro-  
 phet *Isaiab* to have been the happy effect of  
 God's afflicting hand upon his own people.  
*Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they*  
*poured out a prayer, when thy chastning was*  
*upon them, 26. 16.*

Sometimes God is pleased to afflict his servants to *prove* them, to know whether they love him with *all their heart* and with *all their soul*, Deut. 13. 3. that being tried in the furnace of tribulation, and found faithful, they may come out from thence like *gold cleansed and purified*, but not *consumed*; to train them up with this useful moral discipline in the exercise and for the improvement and manifestation of many excellent graces and virtues, such as faith, hope, patience and the like, which might otherwise lie, like the talent of the unprofitable servant in the parable, bound up in a napkin, like hidden treasure, unknown to themselves, and of no use to others: whereas being employed in the bank of *afflictions*, they may return great *increase* and advantage to the possessors, the peaceable fruit of righteousness, bring glory to God, and to their brethren the benefit of a good example for their encouragement and imitation.

Lastly, Let it be considered, that the afflictions of *this* life, how grievous soever to  
*flesh*

SERM. *flesh and blood*, will in *another* state be amply  
 VI. recompensed to all those, who fear God, and  
 ~~~~~ live in obedience to his laws.

Yet a little while——and a day will come, when they that sow in tears shall reap in joy, *Psal.* 126. 5. when God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away, *Rev.* 21. 4. A day——when they who have drank of their master's cup, and, in the Apostle's phrase, *Col.* 1. 24. filled up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ, shall be made partakers of his glory, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, *Heb.* 12. 2. Justly therefore doth St. Paul conclude, *Rom.* 8. 18. *I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.* Agreeable to which is his declaration, *2 Cor.* 4. 17, 18. *Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us an exceeding and eternal weight of glory: while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

From the foregoing considerations we may sufficiently learn, *how* we ought to be-
 have

have ourselves in a state of *affliction* — not S E R M.
 to murmur and complain, and charge God IV.
foolishly, as the manner of *some* is; for this
 is to deal *unthankfully* with God, and to *per-*
vert his counsel *against* ourselves—but to
justify him in this his dispensation, how
 seemingly *severe* *soever*, towards us—to
 acknowledge his wisdom and goodness in
 chusing for us far *better* than, though it be
contrary to, what we *would* chuse for our-
 selves. If it pleases him to cast us upon
 the bed of sickness, we are hereby instructed
 to take notice, that our *health*, without this
seasonable interruption, might have become
 the greatest and most mortal *sickness*, might
 have tempted us to trust in the arm of *flesh*,
 and *forget* our Maker and merciful Preserver;
 that he therefore chastiseth our *bodies*, that
 he may save our *souls*, and for *that reason*
 we should look upon ourselves to be more
favoured in the one, than *punished* in the
 other. If he thinks fit to afflict us with
 the loss of our relations or friends, of those
 who were *lovely and pleasant* to us in their
 lives, and as our *own souls*, of those who
 walked before him in *truth* and with a *per-*
fect heart, and did that which was *good* in
 his sight, *Is. 38. 3.* we are hereby plainly ad-
 monished, not to suffer passion to sway a-
 gainst reason and religion, not to sorrow for
 them, even as others which have no hope,
1 Thes. 4. 13. not to repine, that *they* are
withdrawn,

SERM. *withdrawn*, whose death is right *dear* in the
 IV. sight of the Lord, *Psal.* 116. 15. and whose
 society we believe we are *separated* from for
 a *while*, but in *God's good* time shall be *joined*
 with them for ever; but to take occasion
 from thence to follow their virtuous exam-
 ples, whilst it shall please God to continue
 us in the land of the *living*, to love this
 world the *less*, from whence *they* are re-
 moved; and love *heaven* the *more*, whither
they are *gone*.

To conclude: Whensoever it shall please
 God's gracious goodness by *any manner* of
adversity to visit us, this must be our *care*
 and *endeavour*, this will be our *wisdom* and
happiness, to *answer* all those *excellent ends*,
 which, for our *present*, and our *eternal* be-
 nefit, he mercifully designs, he *affectionately*
desires it should produce in us. So shall our
 afflictions be *sanctified* to us: So shall we be
conformed to the image of our blessed Re-
 deemer, who was made *perfect* through *suf-*
ferings, who is our Captain to lead us
 through the distresses, and troubles, and
 tribulations of this mortal life, and through
 the vale of the shadow of death, to a state
 of *perfect rest*, and *peace*, and *everlasting*
joy.





S E R M O N V.

A Funeral Sermon occasion'd by the
Death of Bishop L L O Y D.

R E V. xiv. 13.

*I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write,
blessed are the dead which die in the Lord,
from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit,
that they may rest from their labours, and
their works do follow them.*

 H E S E words are a special Re-S E R M. V.
velation by an immediate voice from Heaven, and in their general import set forth the blessed state of the Righteous after death, which consists in their being delivered from all the pains and troubles which attended them in this life, and their enjoying the fruits of their labours in the next. If we take a survey of this life, we must, with the Royal Preacher, conclude it to be
vanity

SERM. *vanity and vexation of spirit; a vale of mi-*

V. *fery and tears, encompassed with difficulties, and overwhelmed with sorrows, where no true, no substantial joys are to be found. With what a load of grief and disquietude is the soul of man frequently oppressed, whilst it is imprisoned in this earthly tabernacle! how doth every passion ruffle and discompose it! how subject to be disturbed with anger, to fear where no fear is, to be consumed with envy, and set on fire by lust, to be vexed with disappointments and distracted with doubts! How many are the diseases which prey upon and waste our bodies, and bring them down into the dust of death! How are we continually exposed to a thousand accidents, which the wisest foresight cannot prevent, nor the greatest strength withstand! How open do we lie to the arrows that fly by day, to the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and to the sickness that destroyeth in the noon-day! Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery: This little space is filled up with numberless sorrows; on which account the Wise Man cries out with a peculiar emphasis, I praised the dead which are now dead, more than the living which are yet alive. Eccles. 4. 2. Such then being the troubles and calamities of life, what a mighty comfort, what an unspeakable satisfaction must it be to be freed from them!*

We

We seem in this our mortal state to resem-
ble those that go down to the sea in ships, and
occupy their business in great waters; who
are carried up to the heaven, and down again
to the deep, and their soul melteth away be-
cause of the trouble: at length they arrive at
the haven where they would be; then are
they glad, because they are at rest. Psal. 107.
23, &c. When Job in the bitterness of
his soul had cursed the day of his birth, as
an entrance into a scene of misery, he af-
terwards, in most pathetick terms, describes
the mansion of death, the Grave, as a
place of freedom from it, wherein men of
all conditions lie together, without diffe-
rence and without distinction; *there the
weary cease from labour, and the wicked from
oppression: the great and the small are there,
and the servant is free from his master.* But
the being freed from the troubles of this
life is not the only thing which constitutes
the blessedness of the children of God, of
those who die in the Lord; for death to
them is not only a cessation from misery,
but, what is a more comfortable reflexion,
an introduction to happiness. *Their works
shall follow them*; they shall meet with a re-
compense of reward for the good deeds
they have done during their pilgrimage up-
on earth. When the virtuous soul is sepa-
rated from the body, and finds itself freed
from the fetters which detained it here, it
taketh

S E R M.
V.

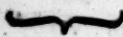
SERM. taketh its flight and returneth to Him that
 V. made it. The body is committed to the
 earth out of which it was formed, there to
 wait the general summons, when the trumpet shall sound, and command the numerous race of mankind to spring forth out of corruption: Then it shall be raised, revived, immortalized and reunited to the soul, and made to bear the *image of the heavenly Adam*, as it before bore the *image of the earthly*, 1 Cor. 15. 49. Then shall they both together tread the path of life, and in the presence of God be made joint partakers of the fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore. These are the blessed rewards of their living and dying in the Lord.

Thus we see that happiness is annexed to holiness, without which *no man shall see the Lord*. If then *we have our fruit unto holiness*, we shall *in the end attain everlasting life*. Not that we are to imagine, that all or any of our good deeds are in themselves meritorious; *for when we have done our best, we are still unprofitable servants*, still unworthy of the least of God's mercies: But if we are sincere in the performance of our duty, if we make the Law of God the rule of our actions, and the imitation of Christ the business of our lives, if we run our christian race with patience, and continue faithful to the end, God will
 accept

accept our works through the merits of SERM.
 Christ; he will give us a Crown of Life for V.
 the sake of his Son, who hath purchased it
 for us by the effusion of his most precious
 blood, and opened the kingdom of Heaven
 to all Believers.

The measure of the rewards which God
 hath promised to, and will bestow upon those
 who live and die in his faith and fear, we
 are not able to declare or comprehend: The
 Apostle who was rapt up into the *third*
heaven, seemed best enabled to give some
 account of them: But so imperfect was the
 discovery he made there, that he perempto-
 rily declares, that *eye hath not seen, nor ear*
heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of
man to conceive the things which God hath
prepared for them that love him. But, bles-
 sed be God, as we know whom we have
 believed, so we know that our faith in him
 shall be rewarded, that *our labour shall not*
be in vain in the Lord. *We know*, says the
 Apostle, 2 Cor. 5. 1. *that if our earthly*
house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we
have a building of God, an house not made
with hands, eternal in the heavens. We as-
 suredly know, that our gracious Redeemer
 will, at the great decisive day of judgment,
 pronounce this comfortable sentence to the
 Righteous, *Come, ye blessed of my Father,*
inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the
beginning of the world, Matth. 25. 34. A
 G Kingdom,

SERM. Kingdom, where never-fading crowns of

V.  glory are prepared for good and holy men; a Kingdom not like an earthly one, subject to changes and revolutions, disturbed with factions, and shaken with tumults; but one that stands fast for ever, a place of rest and tranquillity, where peace and order, harmony and love dwell for evermore; and consequently a Kingdom, which must of necessity be the most prevailing motive to us to encounter the greatest difficulties which obstruct our passage to it, and in the most forcible manner excite our faith and quicken our obedience, that we may so live as at length to *die in the Lord*.

With the delightful prospect of being made subjects of this Kingdom, were the primitive Professors of Christianity animated; for this, they were *stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord*; for this, they despised the world with all its pomps and vanities, and endured the most bitter sufferings; for this, they earnestly desired *to be dissolved*; they chearfully laid down their bodies in the dust, there to rest in hope 'till the Resurrection of the Dead, and resigned their Spirits into the hands of their merciful Redeemer.

But although *they who die in the Lord, rest from their labours, and their works follow them*, to bear testimony for them before the Tribunal of Heaven, yet the memory of them

them remains and flourishes upon earth : S E R M.
 they leave behind them a good name, far V.
 better than precious ointment, and rather
 to be chosen than great riches; for the same
 eternal spirit of truth who declareth that
 they rest from their labours, hath pro-
 nounced that they *shall be had in everlasting*
remembrance, Psal. 112. 6. *There be* (saith
 the eloquent Son of Sirach) *of them that*
have left a name behind them, that their
praises might be reported; and some there be
who have no memorial, who have perished as
though they had never been, and are become
as though they had never been born, and their
children after them. But these were merciful
men, whose righteousness hath not been forgot-
ten; their bodies are buried in peace, but
their name lives for evermore; for the people
will tell of their wisdom, and the congrega-
tion will shew forth their praise, Eccclus. 44.
 8, 9, 10, 14, 15. This is a debt due to
 the merit of those who have distinguished
 themselves for Piety and Goodness whilst
 they abode upon earth, and hath a mighty
 influence over those who survive them, in
 animating them to the pursuit of holiness
 and virtue, and encouraging them to walk
 before the Lord in the land of the living;
 for those whom we honour, we desire to
 imitate.

I doubt not but what I have been dis-
 coursing, brings to your minds the idea of

SERM. our late excellent Diocesan; one in whom
 V. all that is good and eminent, all that is lovely and praise-worthy, shone forth with a bright lustre; with whose loss, all orders and degrees of men amongst us are sensibly afflicted. Give me leave to bespeak your patience, whilst I mention to you some of his Virtues, which, barely to recite, is sufficiently to commend.

But what a copious subject have I, who am far unequal to the weighty task, entred upon! Such fecundity of matter offers it self, so many thoughts crowd in upon me, whilst I think upon the great good man, that I am at a loss what part of his Character to consider first. When different objects are at once presented to the eye, it is confounded with the variety, and sees none of them distinctly.

Shall I begin with the strong impression of Piety and Goodness, the Pregnancy of his Parts, the Liveliness of his Imagination, the Strength of his Judgment in his tender Years, his indefatigable Application to the most useful Studies, the wondrous Improvement he made, and the surprizing Skill he shewed in the knowledge of the *Latin*, *Greek* and *Hebrew* Languages, at an age when most other children are initiated into the elements of the first of them! At eleven years old he was ripe for, and sent to the University of *Oxford*, of which he became

an Ornament, as soon as he was admitted a S E R M.
 Member. He had at that time an oppor- V.
 tunity of discovering what he was, and if
 it should please God to continue his life, of
 shewing what he certainly would be, by be-
 ing submitted to the examination of some of
 the Governors of that famous Seminary of
 Learning, who observed with wonder and
 pleasure the vast Abilities of the Scholar,
 and the peculiar Modesty of the Child.
 This, one of them, who was afterwards an
 eminent * Archbishop of our Church, men-
 tioned to his honour, when he happened to
 preach before him upon a solemn Occasion.
 He lived in the University in times of pub-
 lick confusion, when iniquity abounded,
 and the love of many to real godliness
 waxed cold, when to commit Sacrilege was
 the characteristick of Religion, and to rebel
 against the Prince was to do God service.
 In those times he preserv'd his innocence,
 and held fast his integrity; he continued
 firm in his duty to God, in an uncorrupted
 loyalty to the King, and sincere affection to
 the Church of *England*; of the latter he
 gave a noble proof, by receiving Episcopal
 Ordination a little before King *Charles* was
 beheaded; a time, when Episcopacy, and
 all the Adherents to it, laboured under all
 the human discouragements imaginable.

G 3

After

♦ Dr. *Sheldon*.

SERM. After the King's execrable murder, (which,
 V. together with the unhappy causes of it, no
 ~~~~~ man more heartily lamented) whilst some  
 through fear, and others in hopes of gain,  
 declared in favour of the Usurpation, our  
 late excellent Prelate, as he could not ap-  
 prove it in his conscience, so neither would  
 he give any countenance to it by a sinful  
 compliance. Many offers of advancement  
 were then made to him; but they all served  
 only to illustrate the integrity of his heart,  
 and the steadfastness of his resolution: He  
 still owned himself a Member and a Mini-  
 ster of the Church of *England*; and, du-  
 ring his stay at the University, joined him-  
 self with those who adventured to worship  
 God in the words of its Liturgy, and, as  
 himself expressed it, even then declared his  
 obedience to the Laws of it. \*

When it pleased God to put an end to  
 the evil of those days, and raise our Church  
 and Nation out of that dismal confusion in  
 which they had long lain, by the Restora-  
 tion of the Royal Family; and when the  
 Religion of *Rome* gradually increased amongst  
 us with the Politicks of *France*; then did  
 the learned Clergy think it high time to op-  
 pose the growing mischief; amongst whom,  
 as no one was more able than our late Dio-  
 cesan, so no one set himself more vigo-  
 rously to the necessary work of exposing the  
 modern

• *Sermon at Bishop Wilkins's Funeral.*

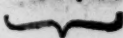


modern inventions of the *Romish* Church, SERM.  
and asserting the Primitive Doctrines of our V.  
own. Not long after this, he was, with-  
out his own seeking it, advanced to one of  
the largest and most populous Parishes in  
*London*, that afforded him a sphere of ac-  
tion, which he was every way capable of  
filling: And here, how did he labour in  
the Word and Doctrine! What an example  
was he to the Believers in Conversation, in  
Spirit, in Charity, in Faith, in Purity! It  
was his employment and his delight to feed  
the Flock of Christ, to be instant in season  
and out of season, to instruct the ignorant,  
to convince the gainsayer, to confirm the  
wavering, to rebuke the vicious, to com-  
fort the afflicted, and relieve the necessitous.

He was afterwards, to the joy of all good  
men, advanced to the Episcopal Dignity,  
and appointed to be a Governor in that  
Church, which for many years he had so  
illustriously adorned by his life, and so suc-  
cessfully defended by his labours. It seems  
to have been an especial Providence that  
raised him to that high station, at a time  
when the Church began to stand most in  
need of such a Governor. For now the  
Popish Faction began to triumph, conceiv-  
ing great hopes of trampling the Reforma-  
tion under their feet, and lording it over  
God's heritage. A bigotted Prince ascend-  
ed the throne, who thought himself ob-  
liged

SERM. liged by all the ties of Conscience and Religion, to extirpate the Protestant Faith, and establish the Corruptions of the Church of *Rome* upon a lasting foundation. I need not remind you of his assuming a power to dispense with the fundamental Laws of the Realm, or of his ensnaring Declaration for Liberty of Conscience, which was calculated for the destruction of our Religion, or of any of the rest of the violent and unwarrantable methods that were then made use of to enslave both your bodies and your souls.

It will always be remembered how our late good Bishop, in conjunction with six of his venerable brethren, behaved himself on this remarkable, this critical occasion; how he obeyed God rather than man, when his obedience to the one was absolutely inconsistent with his duty to the other; how neither the smiles of a Court could allure him to betray the interest of the Church, nor the repeated menaces of an arbitrary Prince affright him into a base compliance with illegal practices; it will be remembered to his immortal honour, how at that juncture he zealously approved himself as the Minister of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in distresses, in imprisonment; how he dared to be a Confessor for the cause of God and the defence of his Church; and, if it had pleased God to have brought him

to the trial, we have all the reason in the S E R M.  
 world to believe, that he would on the V.  
 same account, with the same chearfulness,   
 with the same constancy of mind, have  
 died a martyr for it: For God gave him  
*not the spirit of fear, but of power, and of*  
*love, and of a sound mind.* Indeed there was  
 not in the world a man of more christian  
 magnanimity and hearty zeal for the esta-  
 blished Church: But it was a zeal according  
 to knowledge; a zeal that extended not it-  
 self to Persons, but to Things; a zeal al-  
 ways well employed; always regulated by  
 moderation; which is most certainly a vir-  
 tue, and one of the peculiar ornaments and  
 advantages of the excellent constitution of  
 our Church, and must at last be the temper  
 of her Members, especially the Clergy, if  
 ever we sincerely desire the establishment of  
 this Church, and do not industriously de-  
 sign, by cherishing heats and divisions a-  
 mong our selves, to let in Popery at these  
 Breaches \*.

How faithfully he, in all respects, dis-  
 charged the great and weighty trusts that  
 were committed to him, is well known in  
 all the Diocesess that were successively blest  
 with his government over them. Never  
 surely was any person better qualified to  
 preside over the Church of God than he  
 was,

\* Preface to *Bishop Wilkins's Sermons*, by *Archbishop Tillotson*.



SERM. was; whether we consider the vast compass  
 V. of his Learning, or the sanctity and un-  
 blameableness of his Life, or his constant  
 Hospitality, or the diffusiveness of his Cha-  
 rity, or whatsoever else renders the Episco-  
 pal office venerable.

So universal was his Learning, so com-  
 prehensive was his Knowledge, that we can-  
 not but stand amazed at the consideration  
 of it. If we admire those who have ex-  
 celled others in one single part of useful Li-  
 terature, with what wonder shall we reflect  
 upon the capacities of that Great Man, who  
 had made himself a compleat Master of all  
 the branches of it! So extensive was his  
 Genius, that the learned Bishop *Wilkins*  
 thought it a considerable honour and ad-  
 vantage to him to have so able a partner in  
 his laborious work of the *Universal Charac-*  
*ter*. So exact was his Skill in the darkest  
 parts of History, so correct was his Judg-  
 ment in the nicest points of Chronology,  
 that for the clearing up of the difficulties in  
 both, he was frequently consulted, not only  
 at home, but from abroad. The most  
 learned men, even of the *Romish* commu-  
 nion, have done him the justice to acknow-  
 ledge, that to his accurate researches into  
 Antiquity, they have owed the setting in a  
 perspicuous light what otherwise perhaps  
 might ever have remained in obscurity.  
 With our *British* Antiquities no man was  
 more

more perfectly acquainted; and the noble use he made of them to prove the church government of *Scotland* to have been originally Episcopal, as it was eminently serviceable to the cause of Episcopacy, so it could not but procure to the unanswerable Asserter of it the veneration and esteem of all that loved it.

But here it would be criminal to omit his exquisite knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, to the diligent study of which his high profession led him, and for which his exact skill in the original languages of the old and new Testament fully qualified him. In these he faithfully exercised himself, constantly calling upon God by Prayer for the true understanding of the same, so that he was able by them to teach and exhort with wholesome doctrine, and to withstand and convince the gainayers: So mighty was he in these lively oracles of God, that it is far from invidious to affirm, that in this respect he has not left his equal behind him. As no man abounded more in the knowledge of the sacred Writings, so none was more communicative of it; none more desirous to transfuse it into others; none more studious to remove the prejudices some might entertain against the Scriptures, and in meekness to instruct those who opposed themselves to the truths contained therein: Out of these divine books he reasoned with the most learned

SERM. learned *Jews*, proving that *Jesus* is the  
V. Christ; out of these, he publicly disputed  
with some of the ablest Dissenters in the  
Diocese to which he was first sent, whose  
arguments for their Separation he nervously  
confuted and solidly answered, though he  
found it impossible to silence their clamours;  
out of these, he in the neighbouring city  
exposed the sophistry of the Popish seducers  
who infested it, and had corrupted the faith  
of some; several of whom, to the inexpressible  
satisfaction of his mind, he recovered  
from their apostasy, and confounded the  
pride and put to shame the obstinacy of the  
rest. So ready was he with all faithful diligence  
to banish and drive away erroneous  
and strange doctrine, so vigilant in rescuing  
the flock over which the Holy Ghost had  
made him overseer, from the grievous wolves  
that entred in among them.

The time would fail me to recount to  
you the exact regulation of his dioceses, what  
a perfect insight he had into the respective  
abilities, the conduct and conversation of  
all his clergy; with what suitable solemnity  
he held his visitations; how in his Charges  
he asserted and maintained the doctrines of  
our Church; how his Confirmations returned  
every year, as long as he had strength to undergo  
the fatigue of them, and how he constantly  
took care to have short, easy and  
familiar books dispersed in every parish, to  
prepare



prepare the minds of the youth on those occasions; what wise precautions he took to prevent any scandalously immoral persons entering into holy orders, by requiring those that lived in the same parishes with them, as they and their souls were to answer for it at the dreadful tribunal of God, not to conceal the vices they knew them to be addicted to, and the scandals they had given; how his examination of the Candidates for orders was to them an useful theological exercise; how strictly careful he was to reject those whom he found unqualified; how to those whom he judged fit for the ministry, he laid open the dignity of their function; how he exhorted, pressed and beseeched them in the most affectionate manner to fulfil his joy by taking heed to themselves and to their doctrines, and continuing in them for the glory of God and the edifying of his Church.

So easy was he of access, that he kept none at a distance from him; his doors were always open to strangers and friends, and his plentiful table ready to receive and entertain them; his own carriage and deportment towards them was such as could not but engage them to respect and oblige them to love him; with pleasure and satisfaction they beheld in the venerable aged Prelate a constant air of chearfulness and condescension: The subjects of his discourse were equally agreeable

S E R M.

V.

SERM. greeable and useful, such as at once both

V. pleased and instructed: He would often take  
occasion to mention to them the wisdom  
and the goodness of Providence in bringing  
about the happy Revolution, and with a  
great degree of complacency enlarge upon  
the glorious effects of it, the present enjoy-  
ment of our religion and liberties under the  
auspicious government of the best of Kings;  
and this he did in so affecting a manner,  
that all who heard him could not but be  
convinced that his mouth spake out of the  
abundance of his heart. But when he spake  
of his gracious Mistress the blessed queen  
*Mary*, the good man was filled with rap-  
tures expressive of the sincerest value for her  
dear memory: In the most tender and ex-  
pressive words would he recount the virtues  
of that illustrious ornament of her sex, her  
unfeigned piety, her exalted devotion, her  
condescending humility and extensive charity,  
and then with a religious confidence would  
he cry out, If there be a Saint in heaven,  
she is there.

He knew the blessedness of doing good,  
always remembering the words of the Lord  
*Jesus*, how he said, *It is more blessed to give,*  
*than to receive*, Acts 20. 35. Let the cries of  
the needy, who were daily fed at his gates,  
let the tears of the naked whom he cloathed,  
let the lamentations of the fatherless and  
widows, whose hearts he made to sing for  
joy,

joy, bear testimony to his works of charity; SERM.  
let them speak his praises, and witness the V.  
labours of his love.

The Protestants in the vallies of *Piedmont*, will always remember, how largely he contributed to their support, when they were forced to leave their native land, and to take sanctuary in this kingdom from the violent persecutions which they endured for righteousness sake; they will always thankfully remember, that to his earnest intercession on their behalf with the late glorious king *William* and his most pious and charitable Consort, whose Almoner he had then the honour to be, they owed the settlement of an annual pension, which till of late years was transmitted to them without intermission.

He was not willing that the expectations of the needy should determine with his life; and therefore he settled such charities, as future ages should reap the benefit of, as well as the present. He appropriated the tythes of *Sbeer-Lench* in this neighbourhood for the augmentation of three small livings, the cloathing of poor children, and for such other charitable uses as the trustees shall think it proper to apply them: He handsomely endowed a Charity-School in the neighbouring city for the education of young children. For this, his name shall remain, his memory shall flourish under the sun among



SERM. mong the posterities; for this, the children  
 V. that are yet unborn shall rise up in their generations and praise him.

Upon a view of these eminent graces and virtues that were the confessed parts of our late Prelate's character, we cannot without astonishment think that he should have any enemies: But it is well known that such there were, even amongst those who would be thought the best and truest Churchmen: It is well known that spiteful and envenomed tongues have shot out arrows, even bitter words, to wound his reputation and blacken his goodness. This he knew; but he returned not railing for railing; as they shewed themselves to be acted by the spirit of the accuser of the brethren, so he approved himself a servant of Christ in forgiving. But may we not reasonably ask, was he a betrayer of the Church, who upon all occasions demonstrated his affection and zeal for it, who stood in the gap when it was really in danger, and was ready to fall a sacrifice for it? If indeed his hearty concern for the Protestant succession, which alone could secure the Church, was a crime, it was such a one as his conscience would not suffer him to be sorry for, and no good man, no sincere Churchman will ever repent of. Was he unchristian, whose whole life was spent in a conscientious practice of the duties of Religion? Was he selfish, was he covetous,

covetous, who was always ready to give SERM.  
and glad to distribute, who, as upon very V.  
good grounds I can affirm, bestowed even  
in some late years the fourth part of his  
plentiful income in works of charity? what  
shall be done to thee, O thou false tongue?  
But know, that though he be gone hence,  
he shall be had in honourable remembrance,  
when the impotent malice, and even the  
names of his calumniators shall lie buried in  
oblivion.

He is gone hence, no more to be seen  
on this side the grave, after having lived to  
a very great age, beyond the years of four-  
score and ten: Blessed he is; for he died in  
the Lord; he hath rested from his labours,  
and his works have followed him.

I am very sensible, that I have all this  
while detained you with a very faint and  
languid account of that venerable Father;  
therefore give me leave to conclude this dis-  
course with an application of his own words  
in a funeral sermon preached by him over a  
learned Bishop of our Church; \* words so  
lively, so affectionate, that they cannot but  
make a strong and lasting impression upon  
your minds. "As for us that are now to  
try, how we can bear the want of those  
many blessings we enjoyed in him, what  
shall we say? we must submit to the will

\* Sermon at Bishop *Wilkins's* funeral.

SERMON among the posterities; for this, the children  
V. that are yet unborn shall rise up in their generations and praise him.

Upon a view of these eminent graces and virtues that were the confessed parts of our late Prelate's character, we cannot without astonishment think that he should have any enemies: But it is well known that such there were, even amongst those who would be thought the best and truest Churchmen: It is well known that spiteful and envenomed tongues have shot out arrows, even bitter words, to wound his reputation and blacken his goodness. This he knew; but he returned not railing for railing; as they shewed themselves to be acted by the spirit of the accuser of the brethren, so he approved himself a servant of Christ in forgiving. But may we not reasonably ask, was he a betrayer of the Church, who upon all occasions demonstrated his affection and zeal for it, who stood in the gap when it was really in danger, and was ready to fall a sacrifice for it? If indeed his hearty concern for the Protestant succession, which alone could secure the Church, was a crime, it was such a one as his conscience would not suffer him to be sorry for, and no good man, no sincere Churchman will ever repent of. Was he unchristian, whose whole life was spent in a conscientious practice of the duties of Religion? Was he selfish, was he covetous,



covetous, who was always ready to give S E R M.  
and glad to distribute, who, as upon very V.  
good grounds I can affirm, bestowed even  
in some late years the fourth part of his  
plentiful income in works of charity? what  
shall be done to thee, O thou false tongue?  
But know, that though he be gone hence,  
he shall be had in honourable remembrance,  
when the impotent malice, and even the  
names of his calumniators shall lie buried in  
oblivion.

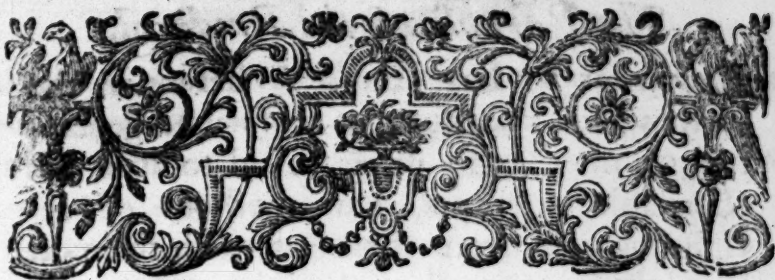
He is gone hence, no more to be seen  
on this side the grave, after having lived to  
a very great age, beyond the years of four-  
score and ten: Blessed he is; for he died in  
the Lord; he hath rested from his labours,  
and his works have followed him.

I am very sensible, that I have all this  
while detained you with a very faint and  
languid account of that venerable Father;  
therefore give me leave to conclude this dis-  
course with an application of his own words  
in a funeral sermon preached by him over a  
learned Bishop of our Church; \* words so  
lively, so affectionate, that they cannot but  
make a strong and lasting impression upon  
your minds. "As for us that are now to  
"try, how we can bear the want of those  
"many blessings we enjoyed in him, what  
"shall we say? we must submit to the will

\* Sermon at Bishop *Wilkins's* funeral.

S E R M. " of God. Our comfort is, that we shall  
 V. " follow, and come together again in due  
 " time. Till when, farewell pious and  
 " virtuous soul, farewell great and excellent  
 " man, farewell worthy Prelate and faith-  
 " ful Friend. We have thy memory and  
 " example; thou hast our praises and our  
 " tears: Whilst thy memory liveth in our  
 " breasts, may thy example be fruitful in  
 " our lives; that our meeting again may  
 " be in joy unspeakable; when God shall  
 " have wiped away all tears from our  
 " eyes.





## S E R M O N VI.

The Parable of the Prodigal considered.

---

LUKE XV. 17, 18, 19, 20.

*And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger?*

*I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,*

*And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.*

*And he arose, and came to his father.*



**W**HILST our Blessed Lord lived S E R M.  
upon earth, he vouchsafed to VI.  
converse familiarly with Publi-  
cans and Sinners. Sensible of  
his disinterested good-will, and  
obliged by his signal condescensions, they  
H 2 drew



S E R M. drew near to hear him. Whereupon the  
 VI. Scribes and Pharisees, a censorious genera-  
 ~~~~~ tion of men, who never failed to load his  
 charitable attempts, and methods of re-
 claiming men from their sins, with the most
 scandalous imputation of giving *countenance*
 to them, murmured, saying, *This man re-*
ceiveth sinners and eateth with them. In
 order to their conviction, and his own ju-
 stification, he proposes to them certain Pa-
 rables, which if they would attend to
 without their usual prejudices, if they
 would follow the guidance of their own
 reason in the application of them, they
 could not but freely and openly confess their
 own errors and his uprightness, their own
 envy and his innocence.

The first he directs indifferently to all, as
 if he would make them judges in their own
 cause. *What man of you (saith he) having*
an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth
not leave the ninety and nine in the wilder-
ness, and go after that which is lost, until he
find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth
it on his shoulders rejoicing. And when he
cometh home, he calleth together his friends
and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with
me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.
 The application of which Parable is evi-
 dently this: “ You murmur at me secretly
 “ amongst your selves, you upbraid me
 “ openly among the people, you call me a
 “ glutton,

The Parable of the Prodigal.

101

“ glutton, a wine-bibber, a friend to Pub-
“ licans and Sinners: Because I converse
“ with *them*, you charge me with being
“ such as *they* are. But what do I in *this*
“ case, that you yourselves do not in ano-
“ ther of far less moment? If you lose but
“ one sheep of your flock, you leave the
“ care of all the rest; you seek after that
“ which was lost, ’till you find it. I am
“ the true Shepherd, and the Publicans and
“ Sinners, the outcasts of your Synagogues,
“ are my strayed and lost sheep: If you do
“ well in seeking after *yours*, why do you
“ condemn me for seeking after *mine*? If
“ you rejoice and are glad for the finding
“ of *yours*, why may not I do the same for
“ the finding of *mine*? *I say unto you, that*
“ *likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sin-*
“ *ner that repenteth, more than over ninety*
“ *and nine just persons, which need no repen-*
“ *tance.*” That is, which need no univer-
sal change from a state of Sin and Death, to
a state of Grace and Salvation.

This is the first Parable, and the second
bears a near resemblance to it. *What wo-*
man having ten pieces of silver, if she lose
one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep
the house, and seek diligently ’till she find it?
And when she hath found it, she calleth her
friends and neighbours together, saying, Re-
joice with me, for I have found the piece which
I had lost. “ Do you condemn that wo-

H 3

“ man

S E R M. " man for her care and diligence in seeking
 VI. " for the piece which she had lost? If not,
 ~~~~~ " why should you condemn me for seeking  
 " to recover and save lost sinners?

The third Parable is concerning a prodigal Son, wherein our Saviour, in a lively, comprehensive manner, represents God's readiness and willingness to restore repenting sinners to his favour. It begins thus: *A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.* The Father, through an extreme fondness for his Son, without taking time to deliberate, without any scruple conceived in himself, or proposed to the other, gave him what he required.

And now one would think that so unconstrained, so easy a compliance with such a demand, would have made suitable impressions upon the mind of the young man. But instead of entertaining thoughts, which so great an instance of condescension must suggest to every ingenuous temper, instead of behaving himself towards his Father with that regard which *gratitude* must dictate, as well as *duty*, he no sooner was in possession of his portion, but he determined to remove himself, without delay, from the sight of his Father, far from the reach of his counsel and advice, his power and authority: And, in consequence of that resolution,  
 without



without any solemn farewell that we read S E R M.  
of, without any care for his Father's blessing, without any prayer for his Father's welfare, he at once gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, where he led a dissolute and roving life, gave himself up to riots and debaucheries, which wasted his substance and reduced him to poverty. *And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want.* And now we may imagine him, like another *Cain*, wandering about full of discontent and anguish, without hopes of relief. At length he joined himself to a Citizen of that country, who, without any respect to his person, or compassion to his youth, sent him into the fields to feed Swine. So cruel and unmerciful was his Master, that he would not afford him, not only the fragments from his own table, but a share of what the Swine were eating; for *fain would he have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, but no man gave unto him.*

Having thus wasted his substance with riotous living, destitute of support in a land where a mighty famine raged, and when afterwards he betook himself to service, being refused the husks wherewith the Swine were fed, encompassed with such great difficulties, and pressed with such deplorable circumstances, he at length *came to himself*:

SERM. He opened his eyes, as one just recovered  
 VI. out of a long fit; the faculties of his mind,  
 ~~~~~ which had been weakned by a course of  
 riot and excess, began to recover their
 strength, and perform their proper opera-
 tions; Reason and Consideration made him
 sensible of the deceitfulness of sin, in whose
 mazes he had been so long bewildered; he
 was thoroughly convinced of the unfruitful-
 ness of those things, whereof he is now a-
 shamed; with horror and remorse he reflect-
 ed upon the wretchedness of his condition,
 to which his prodigality had brought him;
 with anguish and regret he remembered his
 undutifulness and ingratitude to his good Fa-
 ther; with the utmost solicitude of thought
 he considered how he might regain his love,
 if not by being received as a *Son*, yet at
 least by being hired as a *Servant*; he resolv-
 ed to return to his Father, and he put this
 resolution in practice.

In my following discourse I propose to
 consider,

First, What is implied in these words of
 the Text, *When he came to himself*.

Secondly, The Prodigal's exclamation, ex-
 pressive of his calamitous condition.

Thirdly, His resolution of arising and go-
 ing to his Father, and acknowledging his
 faults.

And

The Parable of the Prodigal.

105

And *Fourthly*, The sincerity and stedfast-
ness of that resolution.

S E R M.
VI.

First, What is implied in these words, *When he came to himself*. And it is plainly this: That whosoever gives himself up to a vicious course of life, is beside himself, is in a state of folly or madness, acts without reason, or against it, in direct opposition to the obligations of Duty, and the motives of Interest.

Almighty God has brought us into the world, and expects from us a serious impartial account of our behaviour in it; he has impress'd his own image upon us, and endued us with reasonable faculties to know and chuse Good, and to refuse Evil. There is an engagement to live virtuously in the very *constitution* of man, an allegiance we are *born* into, an *oath of nature* restraining us from unworthy actions. Agreeably to this, the Moralist * tells him that is a slave to his belly, that gratifies his sensual desires, *Thou hast destroyed the Man, thou hast not fulfilled the promise which thy Being made for thee*.

What is it then but extreme folly, or madness, to transgress the Law written in our hearts, and defeat the excellent purposes for which we were sent into Being; to cast

a

* Arrian. in Epict. lib. 2. c. 9. *at the beginning*. Ἀπώ-
λεσας τὸν ἀνθρώπον, ἐκ ἐπλήρωσας τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν.

SERM. a blemish upon the *human* nature, and sink
 VI. it below itself; by obeying our appetite in
 prejudice to our reason, to abjure the dignity
 of men, and, by compliances with vice,
 degrade ourselves into beasts?

But besides the Law written in our hearts
 by the finger of God, which binds us as we
 are *men*, there is the positive Law of God
 given to the world, and which most immediately
 concerns us, and lays additional obligations
 upon us, the holy Christian Institution; an
 Institution fraught with Rules congenial to
 our Nature, and exactly suitable to the dictates
 of right Reason, requiring us to *set our affections on things above, and not on things on the earth*; to *mortify our members which are upon the earth*, fornication,
 uncleanness, inordinate affection; to *abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul*;
 to *present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service*: An Institution which sets before us
Life and Death, Blessing and Cursing; the
 Promises of the happiness of Heaven to encourage
 us to obedience, and the Threats of the torments
 of Hell to deter us from sin; both which are the
 strongest and most engaging motives imaginable,
 and most justly adapted to work upon the hopes
 and fears of mankind.

Such then being the obligations of the revealed
 Law of God, and the Sanctions of it,

is it not an evident instance of one *beside* SERM.
himself to break its bonds in sunder, when VI.
an eternity of Happiness or Misery depends
upon his conformity to it, or deviations
from it? What is it but *Frenzy* to part
with the solid joys of Innocence for a mo-
mentary dream of Satisfaction; to forfeit
the Favour of God, his Blessing upon Earth,
and our Interest in Heaven, for the plea-
sures of Sin for a season; to walk securely
on in those paths whose *end is destruction*, to
treasure up wrath against the day of wrath,
that dreadful day, when the wicked and *all*
that forget God shall be turned into hell,
where there shall be endless *weeping, and*
wailing, and gnashing of teeth; where the
blasphemer's tongue shall want a drop of
water to cool it; where the wanton, lascivious
eye, that here lusted after beauty,
will behold nothing but objects of horror
and deformity; where the intemperate Vo-
luptuary shall drink full cups of God's in-
dignation; where there is a complex of
every kind of Pain, and every kind of Loss,
the presence of all Ill, and the absence of
all Good, every Punishment an *almighty*
Power can inflict, or *weak mortality* can
suffer?

So unreasonable is the wild range of sen-
sual Desire, so evidently doth that man for-
feit all pretensions to wisdom and discretion,
who gives the reins to his appetites, and in-
dulges

SERM. indulges himself in sinful gratifications, that
 VI. generally, in the language of Scripture, a
 ~~~~~ *fool* and a *wicked person* are equivalent terms:  
 And on the other hand, the practice of Religion is so agreeable to *true wisdom*, that a *wise* man imports the same with a *good* one. Of the perverse and rebellious *Israelites*, *Moses* thus complains, *Deut. 32. 28. They are a Nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them*; to which he subjoins this affectionate and ardent wish, *O, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!*

Answerably to this way of speech, the man *void* of understanding, in the book of *Proverbs*, is the unclean Person, the *foolish Virgins* in the Gospel are the Slothful and Negligent, and the *fool* in the *Psalms* is the Atheist and Profane. But, as the *Psalmist* speaks, *Psal. 3. 10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, a good understanding have all they that do his commandments*; or, as it is express'd in the book of *Job. 28. 28. with little variation, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.*

Having shewn what is implied in these words, *When he came to himself*, I shall now consider the Prodigal's Exclamation, expressive of his calamitous condition, *How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger!*

Every



Every word of this complaint is big with S E R M. distress, and carries with it its burden of sorrow. VI.

How many, not of the *chiefest* in my Father's house, but how many *hired Servants*, who are of the least account in it, are in a better estate than myself! they *bond*, I *free* by birth; they *servants*, I a *child*; they appointed to *labour*, I to enjoy my *rest* and be happy in the smiles of a gracious father. But now through my folly my birthright is forfeited, through my sins my dignity is gone; I have lost the name of a child, and am become a servant, the basest of servants and in a *strange* country: My father's servants are in their own land, breathe the air of their own country, and live amongst their own acquaintance and friends: But I am an exile, an alien, a stranger to my father's house, a servant to a barbarous master, hopeless and destitute; for what can I hope for, that have not bread to eat? The meanest, the least respected, the most miserable wretch in my father's house hath bread enough, abounds with all things necessary for the life of man; but I am so far from being satisfied with bread which is due to him that labours, that I labour and eat not; I work, but I am ready to perish with want, to die for hunger.

Let the men of sensuality and pleasure (if they can prevail upon themselves to be serious for a while) consider this in a spiritual

SERM. tual sense, and think within themselves,  
 VI. how vastly preferable the condition of the  
 ~~~~~ poorest servants of God is to that of them,  
 who consume their time, their substance and
 themselves in riotous living; how much
 greater freedom there is in the fear of God
 than in the service of sin; how much more
 eligible it is to be *a door-keeper in the house of*
God, than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness.

Let them consider how many base and
 ignoble persons, as they have thought them,
 whose life they have counted to be madness,
 and their end to be without honour, will
 have their mansions in the kingdom of God,
 where they shall partake those joys, *which*
eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath
it entered into the heart of man to conceive;
 whilst the impenitently wicked shall be for
 ever excluded from them, shall in vain hun-
 ger after the celestial food of Angels, in
 vain thirst after the rivers of pleasure at
 God's right hand.

Let them weigh these things in their
 minds, and then if they desire to be ad-
 mitted into those regions, where there is
 neither hunger nor thirst, let them with
 the Prodigal come quickly to themselves;
 let them resolutely shake off the chains of
 their sins; let them with him quit the
 baseness of their service, that so they may
 be received into their *Father's* house, where
 they may be sure to have bread enough, the
 plenty

The Parable of the Prodigal.

III

plenty of those joys, and the fulness of those SERM.
satisfactions, which are divine, infinite and VI.
immortal !

Again: This exclamation of the prodigal Son, so expressive of his calamitous condition, suggests to us this useful observation, that affliction is an excellent enforcement to consideration: which is the proper exercise of reasonable creatures, and the want of it one of the principal causes of the sins of mankind: He who in the days of his affluence, had without controul, without fear, without intermission given up himself to vile affections and riotous living, now when hunger, and thirst, and poverty invade him, begins to come to himself; his distress awakens his remorse, and compels him to think upon his ways, and consider the evil of his doings.

A state of prosperity has a strong tendency to corrupt mens minds, and to make them forget God and themselves: but when the scene is changed, when the judgments of God are sent forth as messengers to call home wandering sinners, they begin to have *another* sense of things, to enquire after God, and to repent of their wickedness, saying, what have we done? Of the *Jews*, God says, *Hos. 5. 15. That in their afflictions they would seek him early*: When other methods failed, *these* would reduce them to their duty. *These* have a peculiar propriety
and

SERM. and fitness in them to open mens ears for
 VI. instruction, and command their strict attention
 to the united voices of reason and conscience.

Therefore the Prophet *David* doth not only profess for himself, *Lord, it is good for me that I have been afflicted*, Psal. 34. 12. but he pronounces it as a blessing for all others: *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord.* — Blessed indeed — if this method of divine wisdom makes the impressions and produces the good effects intended by it; if he refuseth not to return to himself and his duty; if he is ashamed and confounded for the sins of his youth; if in his collected sober thoughts he stedfastly purposes to lead a new life, and enters into the wise resolution of the Prodigal — *I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants.*

Great surely was the necessity of his *arising*, who had been so long settled upon the lees of sin, *Zeph.* 1. 12. But whither should he go? Shall he return to the companions of his vices, upon whom he hath wasted his substance? They are not likely to receive him, unless he had *another* portion to spend upon them: Shall he implore the relief of *others*? The mighty famine in the land cuts off all
 hopes

hopes of success with *them*. Abandoned SERM.
 and alone, what shall he do in this great VI.
 streight, this *last extremity*? There is but
one way left: I will arise and go to my fa-
ther: though I have abused him, and con-
 sumed the substance he gave me, though
 I was weary of his government, though I
 forsook him, and in a manner fled from
 him, yet will I go to my father; all *other*
 ways have deceived me; I will try this,
 though there be *least* reason for it: For how
 shall I dare to appear before my father, from
 whom *in the greatness of my folly I went*
astray? Prov. 5. 23. How shall I dare to
 look upon him, whom I have so highly of-
 fended? It may be, that as I have abounded
 in *sin*, he may abound in *grace* toward me:
 It may be, that by my sorrow I may move
 his affections, and turn his bowels within
 him to have compassion on me, and there-
 fore I will go to my father —— but not with
 any confidence of my past worth, as, that
 I was a son, and a beloved son——not with
 any excuses or alleviations, as, that I was
young, and therefore easy to be deceived and
 led aside from my duty, but with shame
 and confusion of face, with a plain and un-
 disguised confession of my sins: *I will say*
to him, Father, I have sinned against that
Almighty Power, whose throne is in heaven,
and against thee, and am no more worthy to
*be called thy son——*I dare not, I cannot
 I hope

SERM. hope for favour from the strong and endearing ties of blood and intimate relation; VI. for these I have wickedly broken through and violated: I do not intreat to be received as a *son* with kisses and embraces, with feasting and triumphs—let me be admitted and entertained as an *hired servant*; let thy countenance and kindness be the wages of my *labour*; *this* will be enough, *this* will content me, *this* will be abundant matter of joy to me.

To apply this for our spiritual use and improvement, we may observe,

First, That a *good resolution* was the first step of the Prodigal's return, and the true ground of his subsequent behaviour: This is a rational determination of the will to mortify our sinful lusts and affections, to renounce and forsake all our evil courses, and not to suffer ourselves to be led aside any more by the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil: It is a fixed and peremptory choice, flowing from the real conviction of our judgments, to amend our lives and turn to the Lord our God, and for the future to govern ourselves by the rule of his commandments.

But in order to the goodness of our resolutions, it highly concerns us to know, that they must be formed, not in confidence of our own strength, but with earnest supplications for, and in an humble trust in the assistance

The Parable of the Prodigal.

115

assistance of the blessed spirit of God, from SERM.
whom all holy desires, all good counsels, VI.
all religious purposes proceed. 

Secondly, 'Tis observable that the Prodigal resolved to go to his offended father without having recourse to others to intreat for him. In like manner ought we miserable sinners to come to *our father* which is in heaven, without imploring the intervention and mediation of Angels and fancied or true Saints to plead our cause and sollicit our interest. We know the church of *Rome* hath for this end solemnly adopted *them* as the objects of invocation, which is one of the most proper acts of religious worship, and therefore due to God only. It is pretended to be presumption in an high degree to dare to approach the supreme majesty of God, since we speak not to an earthly Potentate, but by the mouths of them who have the honour to be near him. But since we know, that God makes no difference of persons, that the least are as near to *him* as the greatest, and since we have the command of God himself to come to him, without the exception of the *meanest* person, certainly it is not presumption to do it.

Should an earthly Potentate vouchsafe this favour to any one to have free access to him, to make his own request, and withal should he assure him, that whatsoever he asks, if he asks as he ought, shall be granted him,

SERM. can we think that he would forbear to come
VI. into his sight? This is the case between God

and us. For as St. John declares, 1. 5. 14, 15. *This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*

'Tis true, that we sinful dust and ashes stand in need of a Mediator and Advocate, and God hath been graciously pleased expressly to point out to us, *whose* mediation and intercession we must rely upon, not that of Saints and Angels, but of *Jesus Christ*, the only Mediator between God and Man, the only Advocate with the Father, *who appears in the presence of God for us*, Heb. 9. 24. We are as sure as the word of God can make us, that in him alone we have the privilege to cry *Abba, Father*, Gal. 4. 5. We are sure, that, Heb. 7. 25. *He is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him, seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession for them, and that whatsoever we shall ask the Father in his name, he will give it us*, John 16. 23.

Thirdly, by the prodigal Son's resolution of making a personal submission to his Father and acknowledgment of his faults, we are instructed to humble ourselves before God, and to make an hearty and unfeigned confession of our sins to him, to testify in
the

the most suitable manner we are able our SERM.
thorough sense of shame, the intenseness of VI.
our grief, the bitterness of our remorse for
having offended our most merciful Father,
and our hopes of pardon through the merits
of our most gracious Redeemer.

It is surely no small matter of consolation to us to reflect, that though we are heavy laden with the burden of our iniquities, we have a *better Father* to go to, than the Prodigal had, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, *who willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live*, who delights in the sacrifice of a *troubled, a broken and contrite Spirit*; who invites, intreats, beseeches, importunes them to confess their sins *with an humble, lowly, penitent and obedient heart, to the end that they may obtain forgiveness of the same by his infinite goodness and mercy.*

This consideration therefore should dispose and excite us to take up strong resolutions of casting ourselves before God's tribunal, and meekly acknowledging our vileness; to say with *Job, 7. 20. I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men?* And with the *Psalmist, I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me: Against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight, Psal. 51. 3, 4, 5.*

SERM. But after all, it must be observed, that our
 VI. best resolutions will be of no avail, unless
 we actually fulfil them: And this the Prodigal did; for he arose and came to his Father.

Resolution is a term of relation only, and of no manner of importance but in order to the action: The *purpose* of amendment is not *amendment*, and if it be not really accompanied with it, it will increase our guilt and aggravate our condemnation. Miserably therefore do those men deceive themselves, who are for the present contented with good *desires* without effect, which too nearly resemble the fig-tree which our Lord found bearing leaves without fruit, *Matt. 21*. Fatal is their delusion, who being convinced of the necessity of amending their lives, do yet put it off to some other Season, and having designed to forsake their evil ways, and to return to their duty, do not immediately set about so momentous a work.

You know the speech of the Sluggard in the book of Proverbs, 6. 10. *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep.* Thus doth he carelessly indulge himself, *till his poverty comes as one that travels, and his want as an armed man.* Parallel to this is the behaviour of too many thoughtless Christians: a *little more pleasure*, say they, a *little more enjoyment* of the
 the

The Parable of the Prodigal.

119

the good things of this life, and we will turn to God it may be ere long, certainly before we die; and thus they go on in their sins, as if the mercies of God were chained down to them; not considering, that their calamity may come suddenly, *that suddenly they may be broken without remedy*, Prov. 6. 15. Not reflecting, that as God is merciful, so is he just; as he is loving, so is he jealous of his honour, and will not always suffer his patience and gentleness to be trampled on and abused.

Very soon was the returning Prodigal made sensible of the happy effect of speedily performing his vow. For, as the sequel of the parable informs us, when he was yet a great way off, *his Father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him*: He was received not with mercy only, but with respect too into the arms of his indulgent Father; his late, but humble penitence was accepted; his nakedness was covered with a rich robe; his hunger, that before desired the husks which fed the swine, was satisfied in a solemn feast; and he who under the pressure of his necessities made it the height of his ambition to be entertained as the *meanest servant*, was once more reckoned as a *Son*. After all our provocations, God will be reconciled, if we make no long tarrying to turn to him, and put not off from day to day; if we will make our peace with

I 4 him,

SERM. him, while we are yet in the way. No one
VI. is so much a *Father* as God; no one so full
of compassion and mercy; no one so ready to meet those that set themselves to come to him in earnest; no one so willing to consider their contrition, to accept their tears, and seal their pardon.

I shall close all with the affectionate exhortation of the Prophet *Isaiah*, 55. 6, 7. *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*





S E R M O N VII.

At the Primary Visitation of MARTIN
Lord Bishop of Gloucester.

J O H N XV. 8.

*Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear
much fruit.*



N the context our blessed Sa-SERM.
viour illustrates the intimate VII.

union betwixt Himself and all
true Believers, under the similitude of a Vine and its Branches;

shewing thereby, that they derive all their
Spiritual Life from him by the communica-
tions of his Grace, which is distributed to
them, as Sap to the branches of the Vine,
*Abide in me, and I in you: As the branch
cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in
the Vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in
me. I am the Vine, ye are the Branches; he
that*

SERM. *that abideth in me, and I in him, the same*

VII. *bringeth forth much fruit: for without me, or severed from me, ye can do nothing.* In which Declaration it is evidently implied, That in order to the right discharge of our Duty, our own endeavours must be used; (otherwise we receive the grace of God in vain) that we must be fellow-workers together with God, who graciously vouchsafes us his continual assistances. So says St. Paul to the *Philippians*, Philip. 2. 12, 13. *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for, or upon this very account, because it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do.* There is a necessity of the *Branches concurrence* with the Vine, in order to the production of Fruit, though that continually diffuses sap and vigor to them.

The like figurative scheme of speech is frequently used in Scripture. Thus in the first *Psalms*, David describeth his blessed Man to be like a Tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in due season. John the Baptist Matth. 3. calls upon the Pharisees and Sadducees to bring forth fruits meet for repentance; for the ax is laid to the root of the tree; therefore every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire. Agreeably to this way of expression, St. Paul, Rom. 6. 22. speaks of Christians having their fruit unto holiness. And chap. 7. ver. 4. he declares

clares the end of their being delivered from S E R M.
the curse of the Law to be this, that they VII.
should *bring forth fruit unto God.*

Not only to bring forth no *corrupt* fruit, but all the *good* fruit we can, the *fruit of the Spirit*, which is in *all goodness, righteousness, and truth*, Eph. 5. 9. Not only to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, but to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*, as St. Paul in his Epistle to Titus 2. 12. has summarily expressed the duties of the Christian Life towards God, our neighbours, and our selves. To *grow in grace, and improve the talents* which the bountiful Bestower of every good and perfect gift hath committed to our management; to be *rich in good works, in every sort of them, according to our respective opportunities and abilities*; *these* are things indispensably required at our hands, and *without these*, leaves and blossoms, how goodly and beautiful soever, that is, our fairest *outward profession* of Religion, will not avail us.

To be frequent hearers of God's Word, and to understand it, will profit men nothing, unless it be so grafted inwardly in their hearts, as that it may bring forth in them the fruit of *good living*. So our Saviour hath determined in his explication of the Parable of the Sower, *Matth. 13. 23.* where he tells us, that he that *received seed into the good ground, is he that beareth the word*

SERM. word and understandeth it, which also beareth
 VII. fruit, and bringeth forth some an hundred
 fold, some sixty, some thirty; some in a greater measure than others, but all in a good proportion.

Very excellent things indeed, and very justly, are spoken of *Faith*; but *that* is vain and ineffectual, if it be not a real principle and foundation of *obedience*. Accordingly we are enjoined to shew our *Faith* by our *Works*, and by our diligence in the *practical* parts of duty to make our *calling* sure.

Great zeal has appeared and exerted itself amongst men for *speculative* points: But the truth is, our blessed Lord gave himself for us, *that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, distinguished by their observance of his Laws*, not by factions and divisions, and only *zealous of good works*, *Tit. 2. 14.*

The result of our diligently and constantly exercising our selves in *these*, and applying our utmost endeavours to increase in them more and more, is the *Glory* of God. *Herein* (saith our Lord) *is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.*

But, as we read in the book of *Job, 22. 2, 3. Can a man be profitable to God, as he that is wise may be profitable to himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, or any accession to his happiness, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him, that thou makest*
thy

thy ways perfect? And again, Job. 35. 6. SERM. VII.
If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? Or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? Or what receiveth he of thine hand?

Indeed, in *strictness* of speech, it is absolutely *impossible* for us to add any thing to, or diminish from the glory and honour of his Nature and Perfections. He is unchangeably and infinitely *glorious* in and from himself. Nevertheless, by our actions we may *shew forth* the glory of God, give *the honour due to his name*, make *his praise to be glorious*, Psal. 66. 1. and advance amongst men the interests of his Kingdom, which principally consists in universal righteousness and true holiness. By the fruits of obedience in our lives we glorify God *ourselves*, and thereby we may bring *others* to glorify him also.

First, By the fruits of Righteousness and Obedience in our lives we glorify God *ourselves*.

The Heavens (saith the royal Prophet, Psal. 19. 1.) *declare the glory of God*. Those mighty bodies, which he hath placed *there*, are *perpetual monuments* of it, by the exact and constant regularity wherewith they perform their respective Revolutions. *All* the works of his hands here below, in their several kinds, praise him, Psal. 145. 10. by *fulfilling his word*, and *executing his will*. If
then

SERM. then the *inanimate* and *irrational* creatures

VII. shew forth the glory of God, by observing the order wherein his almighty Power and unerring Wisdom settled them; how much *more* may *man* be said to illustrate his glory, when he answers the great purposes of God's placing him in this world? *Man*, the most *obliged* part of the whole visible Creation, honoured with the impression of God's own image upon him, endowed with Reason and Understanding to know Good and Evil, made a *free* and *moral* agent, *directed* in his acts, but not *necessitated* to them: *Man*, whom, when by transgression he had forfeited the likeness to his Maker, in which he was at first framed, and *came short of the glory of God*, Rom. 3. 23. the Divine Goodness graciously condescended to create *again in Christ Jesus unto good works*, Eph. 2. 10. having sent him into the world to repair in us his image, to teach us by the revelation of his Gospel, and enable us by the communications of his grace, to *put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of our minds, and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*, Eph. 4. 23, 24.

Our blessed Lord, whose whole life was spent in seeking his Father's glory, whose *meat* it was to do the will of God, and to
finish

finish his work, Joh. 4. 34, thus prays to SERM.
him *Joh. 17. 4. Father, I have glorified* VII.
thee on earth; to which he immediately sub-
joins, *I have finished the work which thou ga-*
vest me to do. The moral accommodation
of which words to our selves is plainly this;
That *we* then truly *glorify* God, when *we*
yield a ready and constant submission to his
Laws, and whatsoever he has required of us
to do, *we do it with all our might*, with all
the care and diligence of which our condi-
tion in *this* world is capable.

St. Paul, in the first chapter of his Epistle
to the *Philippians*, ver. 11. affectionately
prays for them, that they *may be filled with*
the fruits of righteousness, which he there
adds, *are by Christ Jesus to the glory and*
praise of God. Filled with *these*, we justify
the power of his Grace, from which *all ho-*
ly desires, all good counsels, and all just works
do proceed: we justify the *wisdom* of the ma-
nifestation of the Son of God in the Flesh,
which was *to destroy the works of the devil*,
and plant true Religion in the world; which
blessed end the revelation of his Gospel is
exactly fitted to accomplish.

The same Apostle exhorts the *Corinthians*,
1 Cor. 6. 20. to *glorify God* in their *Body*,
and in their *Spirit*, which are God's —
God's by *purchase* with the *precious blood of*
Christ, as well as by right of creation: in-
timating thereby, that Christians minister to
his

SERM. *his honour and glory, by employing the*
 VII. powers and faculties of *both in his service;*
 by keeping their bodies in *soberness, temperance and chastity, and making them the instruments of righteousness; possessing them* (as he elsewhere prescribes, 1 *Thess.* 4. 4.) *in sanctification and honour, and presenting them a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God,* Rom. 12. 1. by purging their *hearts from all corrupt affections, by making a free-will offering of their souls to him, by adorning them with the graces and virtues of the Gospel, and improving them to as near a resemblance of God in goodness, in purity and love, as they can in this imperfect state attain to.*

Again; we are said to *glorify God*, not only by the purity of our souls and bodies, which are *his*, but also by our Alms and Charities, by ministering to the necessities of others out of our substance—which is *his* too by an unalienable propriety, we being only *stewards* under *him* of whatsoever worldly goods we possess, which are entrusted to us for this very purpose, that we should do good with them.

To feed the hungry, to cloath the naked, to make the Orphan's and the Widow's hearts to sing for joy, this is according to the Wise Man's direction *Prov.* 3. 9. to honour the Lord with our substance; and *Prov.* 14. 31. he gives it as a signal instance, whereby we express our honouring of God; *He that honoureth*

noureth him bath mercy on the poor. To SERM.
which I shall add the saying of the wise Son VII.
of Sirach, Ecclus. 35. 2. *He that giveth*
alms sacrificeth praise.

Secondly, By the fruits of Righteousness
and Obedience in our lives, we may be the
means of bringing others to glorify God.

This is the exprefs reason of our Lord's
command to his Followers, to become bright
examples of holiness and virtue. *Let your*
Light so shine before men, that they may see
your good works, and glorify your Father
which is in heaven, Matth. 5. 16. To the
same purpose is the exhortation of St. Peter,
1 Pet. 2. 12. *Having your conversation ho-*
nest among the Gentiles, that whereas they
speak against you as evil doers, they may, by
your good works which they shall behold, glo-
riify God in the day of visitation. Agreeably
to this, St. Paul tells the Corinthians, 2 Cor.
9. 12. with regard to their works of libe-
rality and charity; *The administration of this*
service not only supplieth the want of the saints,
but is abundant also by many thanksgivings to
God; while by the experiment of this mini-
stration, they glorify God for your professed
subjection to the Gospel of Christ, and for
your liberal distribution to them, and to all
men.

The exemplary virtues of the Professors
of Christianity, in its early ages, when not-
withstanding the many and grievous Perse-

SERM. cutions it laboured under, it had *another* face
 VII. than *now* it wears, their piety and devotion,
 { their meekness and humility, their honesty
 and truth, their sobriety and chastity, and
 unwearied readiness to do good, their being,
 in pursuance of the Apostle's injunction,
*Phil. 2. 15. blameless and harmless, the sons
 of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crook-
 ed and perverse nation, among whom they
 shone as lights in the world;* their walking in
 all respects worthy of their high calling,
 were, in concurrence with the efficacy of the
 Christian Doctrine, and in subserviency to
 the Divine Grace, greatly instrumental to-
 wards *setting*, according to the Prophet Eze-
 kiel's expression, *Ezek. 39. 21. the glory of
 God, and making his name to be hallowed
 among the heathen*, by facilitating and pro-
 moting their conversion to the faith and obe-
 dience of Christ.

Such was the blessed effect of their excel-
 lent examples: Alike useful to the glory of
 God may sincere and faithful Christians hope
 to be, by *providing for things honest, not on-
 ly in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight
 of men*, Rom. 12. 17. and *adorning the doc-
 trine of God our Saviour* by an open visible
 holiness of conversation.

*The path of the just, faith, the Wise Man,
 is as a shining light*, Prov. 4. 18. which doth
 not only manifest itself to others, but hath
 an influence upon them. His shining ex-
 ample

ample doth not only convince them of the SERM.
practicableness of the duties of Religion, but VII.
it has a peculiar force in disposing them to
admire and esteem its beauty and excellency;
it tends to raise in *serious* minds an holy *emu-*
lation; it encourages, it *provokes* them to
good works, to further degrees, to more
eminent heights of Virtue; it awakens the
Careless to the consideration of their *own*
ways, so different from *his*, and in the easiest
and most inoffensive manner *reproves* those
that *will* not be reformed.

What rank or condition soever men hold
in the world, whether they be high or low,
rich or poor, they may contribute in their
several proportions either to the *glory* or the
dishonour of God, by the influence of their
good or bad examples, in the places or
neighbourhoods where they live, edifying
them by the one, or corrupting them by the
other. *Particularly*, all Parents and Masters
have it very much in their power to pro-
mote the practice of Religion in their re-
spective families, by being *religious themselves*,
and, according to the resolution of *David*,
walking in their house with a perfect heart,
Psal. 101. 2. Their shewing themselves in
all things patterns of good works, will add
weight to their serious instructions and so-
ber admonitions, and *give light to all that*
are in the house, Matth. 5. 15. and be an en-
gaging recommendation, an affectionate en-

SERM. dearment of virtue to *them*. On the other
 VII. hand, if they accustom *themselves* to do evil,
 there is too much reason to fear the ill effects
 of their behaviour upon their servants, who
 are constant witnesses of it, and more especially
 upon their children, who are so *near*
 a part of themselves, and very strongly inclined
 to observe, to approve and imitate
 whatsoever they see their *parents* do.

Of how much more forcible and diffusive
 influence is the eminent virtue of Persons of
 rank and fortune, of those who are invested
 with temporal power and authority over
 others, for the punishment of wickedness
 and vice, and the maintenance of God's true
 Religion and Virtue, shining forth with a
glorious lustre, to guide their dependents and
 inferiors into the paths of Righteousness,
 not more conspicuous for the height of their
 stations, than renowned for their substantial
 Piety and Goodness. As on the contrary,
 how fatal, how destructive to the interests
 of Religion are the open and scandalous immoralities
 of the *great* and *mighty*! how
 widely prevalent for the seducing of *multitudes*!
 How daring and triumphant doth
 Vice appear, when countenanced, when *authorized*
 and brought into fashion, into credit and
reputation by their *contagious* examples!

How highly the circumspect, the un-
 blameable lives of that Order of men who
 are

are honoured with the titles and privileges S E R M.
of *Ambassadors of Christ*, and *Stewards of* VII.
the Mysteries of God, conduce to the ad-
vancement of his glory; how their taking
heed to *themselves*, as well as their *doctrine*,
and being *examples of the believers in word*,
in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith,
in purity, 1 Tim. 4. 12. tends to set out the
best Religion in the world, to whose service
they are peculiarly dedicated, to the *best ad-*
vantage, I shall not take upon me distinctly
to consider. I would only observe with re-
gard to the Clergy of our excellent Church,
that there are amongst *them* as bright and
attractive examples of sanctity of Manners,
and innocency of Life, as any Church in the
Christian world can glory in, who constant-
ly adorn, by their conversation, that most
holy Faith which they have successfully de-
fended by their labours; that, considering
the *largeness* of our body, and the frailties
and infirmities of human nature, (which
none of us pretend to be exempt from) it is
no wonder if there are *some*, who, to the
unspeakable grief of the rest, are blemishes,
are scandals to their sacred Character; that
it is evidently an uncharitable, an *unjust* pro-
cedure to charge the faults of a *few* upon
the *whole Order*; that in truth the profane
Scoffers at Religion, the Scorners that de-
light in Scorning, the Fools that hate Know-
ledge, the vicious and debauched part of
K 3 Mankind,

S E R M. Mankind, who are loudest in their clamours
 VII. against us, from whom we must ever expect
 the most contemptuous treatment, the most
 vigorous opposition for our *Office* and *Work's*
 sake, would be *infinitely better* pleased, would
rejoice and *triumph*, if we should act less
 suitably to the Dignity and Holiness of our
 Function, and the particular and solemn
 Engagements wherewith we bound our souls,
 to be diligent in framing ourselves according
 to the *Doctrine* of Christ, and becoming
 wholesom *Patterns* to the *Flock* of Christ;
 if we were *less* contrary to *their* doings, if
 we should *all*, without exception, be so a-
 bandoned as to *run into the same excess of riot*
 with themselves.

I shall now draw an Inference or two
 from what has been said, and so conclude.
 And

First, Since the way to *glorify* God is by
 Fruitfulness in Good Works, how highly
 doth it concern all Christians not to trust to
 any *other* method whatsoever of doing it, in
 prejudice to *this*, which our blessed Lord
 hath laid so great a stress upon in the text!
 Let us not deceive ourselves with an opinion,
 that the *Glory* of God consists only in his
 being *commended* and *applauded* by his crea-
 tures, and that it is *sufficient* for us to enter
 into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his
 courts with praise, and to speak good of his
 name;

name; but let us ever bend our utmost efforts to glorify him, by ordering our conversation aright, Psal. 50. 23. not only putting on the form of Godliness, but evidencing the power of it upon our hearts by an uniform practice of the substantial duties of moral goodness, which the Gospel of God indispensably requires of us, and shew forth his praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to his service, and by walking before him in holiness and righteousness all our days. Let us here upon earth imitate the blessed Angels, whom we hope to be equal to in heaven, by hearkening to the voice of his word; and resemble their active diligence in doing the will of God, as well as their glowing tongues in celebrating his praise. Otherwise, all our devout language, our verbal acknowledgments, are but mockeries of God, to whom the praises, as well as prayers, of the wicked are an abomination.

Again; since by our visible fruitfulness in good Works we may be the means of bringing others to glorify God, and consequently by our viciousness of life may be the occasion of their dishonouring him; from hence we may infer the obligation of an holy exemplary conversation for their sakes and our own — for their sakes, that they may be induced thereby to leave the paths of Sin, bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and

SERM. walk suitably to their Christian Profession;
 VII. — and for our *own*, that we may be entitled to that Crown of Glory, which is prepared for those that *turn many to righteousness*.

The Option is plainly set before us, Whether by being examples of *Virtue*, or of *Vice*, we will be publick *blessings* to the world, or diffusive *mischiefs*; whether we will have the *Virtue* and the *Happiness* of those that are around us, turn to *our account*, or be responsible for *their* unhappy guilt and everlasting misery.

Lastly, Let us all remember, that if we *will* not by our actions *glorify* God, and cause him to be *glorified by others*, yet he neither *can*, nor *will* be *defeated of his glory*. For a Day is coming, when he will in a peculiar manner *exalt* himself above the heavens, and his *glory* above all the earth; — a Day, when he will get *himself honour* upon all those who have affronted and cast vile reproaches upon their Maker, trampled upon his Laws, and *done despite to the Spirit of grace*, and been the Instruments of enticing to Sin and betraying to Misery the souls of *others*; — get *himself honour upon them* in a *severer* way than he did upon *Pharaoh* and all his host, *Exod. 14. 7.* A Day when the *unrighteousness* of men shall *commend the righteousness of God*, *Rom. 3. 5.* by their just confusion and ruin for ever; when,

A Visitation Sermon.

137

as St. Paul declares, 2 Theff, 1. 7, 8, 9, 10. SERM.
the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven VII.
with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire, ta-
king vengeance on them that know not God,
and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus
Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting
destruction from the presence of the Lord, and
from the glory of his power; when he shall
come to be glorified in his saints, and to be ad-
mired in all them that believe, in that day.

*To the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three
Persons and one God, be glory and praise for
ever. Amen.*



SERMON



S E R M O N VIII.

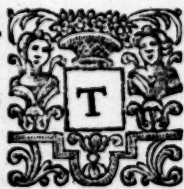
GOD is our Father.

Preached before the KING, Feb. 25, 1728.

ISAIAH lxiv. 8.

O Lord, thou art our Father.

SERM.
VIII.



THAT in a proper and peculiar sense God is the Father only of our Lord *Jesus* Christ, that he only is by nature the Son of God, *begotten before all worlds, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, Heb. 1. 3.* is a fundamental truth, which we all profess to believe. But in some respects God stands in the relation of a Father to us.

First, God is the common Father of mankind by right of creation. *It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves, Psal. 100. 2.* Our earthly parents are but secondary causes under him for the increase of mankind; it is God alone, who by his almighty power fashions them in the womb; which made Da-

vid

vid break forth into that ingenuous confession, S E R M.
Psal. 127. 3. Children and the fruit of the womb are an heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord. He made us after his own image, Gen. 1. 26. endued us with reasonable souls, capable of contemplating him and his works, and in their nature and essence, in their operations and powers bearing some resemblance to him the Father of Spirits, Heb. 12. 9. and the fountain of all being. VIII.

Secondly, God is the Father of mankind as their Preserver, as well as Creator: To him only we all owe the continuance, as well as the original of our being: He graciously ordained an admirable variety of creatures to minister to our use and supply our necessities; he feeds and cloaths, he nourishes and sustains us; *As an eagle, according to the elegant description of Moses, Deut. 32. 11. stirreth up her nest, flutters over her young, spreads abroad her wings, takes them, bears them on her wings;* so with an indulgent care he watches over and conducts us through the manifold changes and chances of this world: He is the guide of youth, and the support of age: He saves our life from destruction; he crowns us with loving-kindness and tender mercies, and rejoices over us to do us good, and to make us happy.

But Thirdly, in an higher respect God is the Father of us *Christians*, by Regeneration and

SERM. and by Adoption. In reference to the former, we are said in Scripture to be *born again*, John 3. 3. *not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of the Lord, which by the Gospel is preached unto us*, 1 Pet. 1. 23, 25. *to be begotten of God's own will, with the word of truth*, Jam. 1. 18. *to be God's workmanship, created (or formed anew) in Christ Jesus unto good works*, Eph. 2. 10. *and to be saved according to the mercy of God our Saviour, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Tit. 3. 5. That divine Spirit is the blessed principle of the *new Creation and second Birth*, the great agent in *restoring the image of God* which sin had miserably defaced in the souls of men.

God is a Father also in respect of *adoption*, which is a gracious and inestimable privilege vouchsafed to all true believers of becoming the sons of God, through the all-sufficient merits of *Jesus Christ*, who is his son by nature. *Blessed*, saith St. Paul, Eph. 1. 3, 5. *be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will: to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

Having thus briefly shewn in what respects God stands in the relation of a Father

to us, I shall in the remaining part of this S E R M.
discourse offer to your meditation some religious duties, which that relation requires
at our hands. Namely, VIII.

That we make our addressees to him by prayer, in an humble confidence of his fatherly love to us, and affectionate care for us:

That we resign ourselves to his will, and submit to his disposals:

That we yield to him the tributes of honour and of love:

That we be obedient to his laws, and return to him by a sincere repentance, whenever we have offended against them:

Lastly, That we continually endeavour after an imitation of his perfections in such measures and degrees, as our imperfect nature is capable of.

First, It engages us to make our addressees to God by prayer, in an humble confidence of his fatherly love to us, and affectionate care for us.

The name of *Father* was a kind of appellative addition amongst the heathens to the compellation of their deities: * And it was

* The name of *Jupiter* (says one of their most eminent moralists) imports the being an assistant and a *Father*; the Poets usually stile him Parent of Gods and Men, and our ancestors called him the good and great; but first they named him good and gracious, then after great; it being a nobler and much better privilege to be beneficial to others, than to possess the greatest wealth. *Tully de Nat. Deor. l. 2. p. 81.*

SERM. held amongst them necessary in their prayers
VIII. and solemn rites of worship to call upon

every god under the title of a Father.
(*Lactant. l. 4. p. 317.*) Under the same name of
a Father the Prophets implored God's mercy
in behalf of the Jewish church and nation.
*Look down from heaven, and behold from the
habitation of thy holiness and thy glory: where
is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of
thy bowels and of thy mercies towards me?
Are they restrained? Doubtless thou art our
Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us,
and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Lord,
art our Father, our Redeemer, thy name is
from everlasting, Is. 63. 16, 17.* That most
absolute prayer, which our blessed Saviour
propounds to us, both as a form for our use,
and as a pattern for our imitation in our ap-
proaches to God, is introduced with this
compellation, *our Father*, Matt. 6. 9. Luke
11. 2. a name of tenderness and compassion
and love, apt to invite and encourage us to
*lift up our hearts with our hands unto the God
in the heavens*, Lam. 3. 41. lay open before
him our necessities, and wants, and distresses,
own our dependence upon him, and recom-
mend all we have and all we do to his good
providence and protection; a name designed
to beget in us a pious hope of a favourable
acceptance of our petitions at the throne of
grace.

Whatso-

Whatsoever treatment a child may look for from an indulgent *earthly* parent, he may more certainly expect and be assured of from his *heavenly*. *What man is there of you, saith our Lord, Matt. 7. 9, 10, 11. whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a Serpent? If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*

There are two things requisite to an action, the agent's *will* first, and then his *power*. Now *earthly* parents may be often either through unkindness *unwilling*, or through necessities *unable* to grant the requests of their children. But neither such defects nor their consequents can have place in *God*: We have no reason to distrust his readiness to help us; *for he made the great and the small, and careth for all alike, Wisd. 6. 7. He hath graciously declared, that though a woman may forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb, yet will he not forget his children, Is. 49. 15. He is infinitely good, and therefore will not deny us any thing that is necessary, and convenient, and salutary for us, any thing that is fit for us to ask, or for him to bestow.*

We have no reason to distrust his power; *for is there any thing too hard for the Lord?*

Gen.

SERM. Gen. 18. 14. *Strong is his hand, and high is his right hand*, Psal. 89. 19. *and mighty to save*,
 VIII. *If. 63. 1. mighty to effect his good designs toward us, and able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think*, Eph. 3. 20. What more *cogent* motive, what more *endearing* engagement can we have to pour out our hearts before him, what can more enliven and actuate our devotions, than to be assured that he is our *almighty* and *most merciful Father*?

Secondly, The relation of a Father, wherein God stands to us, is a proper motive of resignation to his will, and submission to his disposals.

That God as truly wills our good as we possibly *can* do; that he knows *how* to chuse for us, better than ourselves; that he *will* chuse for us with the affectionate regard of a kind parent for his own off-spring, and consequently that it is of infinitely greater advantage to us to be in *his* hands, than our *own*; these considerations, if they have a due influence upon us, cannot fail of composing our minds to an entire acquiescence in him, and making us commit all our ways, and refer all the events of things to him with an implicit affiance. On this account the dutiful children of God are prepared to follow him with chearful hearts, whithersoever he in his infinite wisdom shall think fit to lead them, howsoever his will may

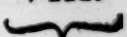
cross

cross their natural desires; being ever re-SERM.
solved to bless the name of the Lord; VIII.
whether he gives or takes away; whether
they enjoy a vigorous state of health, or
languish upon the bed of sickness; whether
they are surrounded with prosperity in all
things, or labour under the pressures of ad-
versity.

Even in the *most afflicting* circumstances,
to consider that they are sent from God, is
an excellent mean to prevent mumuring and
repining, and to make us patient under
them. *I was dumb*, saith the resigned Psal-
mist, *Psal. 39. 9. I opened not my mouth, be-
cause Thou didst it. The cup which my Fa-
ther hath given me, shall I not drink it?* said
our blessed Lord, *John 18. 11.* with a view
to his being *stricken, smitten of God, and af-
flicted* for us men and for our salvation;
whereby he who in the most emphatical
sense *was a man of sorrows and acquainted
with grief, hath given us an example that we
should follow his steps*, in bearing the yoke
which our heavenly Father is pleased to lay
upon us; to lay upon us for our own bene-
fit and advantage. For he doth not afflict
willingly, nor grieve his Children; he is
not a *cruel Being* that *delights* in the miseries
of his Creatures; nor are his *severe* dispen-
sations towards them intended barely to vin-
dicate his absolute dominion, but to evi-
dence his *paternal affection*; to try their
L faith

SERM. faith and obedience, to humble and purge
 VIII. them, to make them consider their ways,
 and put away from them the evil of their
 doings; as an *earthly* Father, with a kind
 intention of reforming his undutiful Child,
 disciplines him with chastisements, and makes
 him feel his *loving* correction. *If, as we*
read in the book of Job, 36. 8, 9. they be
bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of af-
liction, then he sheweth them their work, and
their transgressions that they have exceeded:
He openeth also their ear to discipline, and
commandeth that they return from iniquity.
 I shall conclude this head with the words of
 the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*,
 ch. 12. 5, and following verses. *Ye have for-*
gotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you
as unto Children, My son, despise not thou the
chastning of the Lord, nor faint when thou
art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord
loveth he chastneth, and scourgeth every son
whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastning,
God dealeth with you as with sons: for what
son is he, whom the Father chastneth not?
But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all
(that is, all sons) are partakers, then are ye
bastards, and not sons.

Thirdly, Another duty, which arises from
 God's being our Father, is that of honour-
 ing him. Nature and Religion jointly in-
 struct us to honour our *earthly* parents, and
 shall we not much more honour our Father
 which

which is in heaven? *A Son*, saith God to SERM.
the Jews, *honoureth his Father: If then I be* VIII.
a Father, where is mine honour? Mal. 1. 6. 

That we cherish and preserve in our minds the most worthy apprehensions of him they are capable of; that in the deepest humility of our souls we confess the transcendent excellency of his majesty; the riches of his wisdom and knowledge, goodness and truth; the multitude of his mercies in all the manifestations of them; the beauty, and order, and harmony of all his adorable attributes; that we pay not to any creature the homage which is due to him; that out of the abundance of the heart, filled with a constant and awful sense of that best and most glorious of Beings, our mouths speak and tell of all his wondrous works, with the voice of praise and thanksgiving; (*for who so offers him praise, honours him*, Psal. 50. 23.) that we always mention that name, which is great, wonderful and holy, with the profoundest veneration, and treat every thing that relates to him with reverence and esteem; that we not only *shew forth his praise with our lips, but in our lives, and whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, do all to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. 10. 31. These are things strictly required of us, whereby we may in some measure yield to our heavenly Father that tribute of honour, to which he hath a fundamental right and unalienable claim.

SERM. It is moreover meet, right, and our bounden duty, to use our most hearty endeavours
 VIII. that God may be honoured by *others*, as well as ourselves, to take care that our *light shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven*, Matt. 5. 16. *to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them*, Eph. 5. 4.

Will a good Son with cold indifference, with stupid unconcernedness, see his Father according to *the flesh*, insulted and despightfully used? Can he, without sensible uneasiness of mind, without expressions of dislike and detestation, hear his good name traduced, his virtues blackened by malicious and lying tongues? Will he not make his Father's cause his *own*? Will he not assert and vindicate his injured character? And shall not the dutiful child of God give full proof of a just concern for *his* honour, when he hears his ever-blessed name profaned by oaths, execrations and cursings, or his very being struck at by atheistical discourse, or his holy word made the subject of impious ridicule and the jest of fools? Shall he not do what in him lies to guard the sacred truths of God from the presumptuous assaults of the enemy and blasphemer? Shall he not be as zealous to support and defend, as the adversary to subvert and destroy? Shall he not declare without reserve his indignation
 against,

against, and abhorrence of those open im-
moralities, those daring practices, whereby
God and his religion are dishonoured, and
bend his utmost efforts to stop the progress
of the growing evils? Whosoever doth not,
in opposition to profane and gainsaying men,
vigorously interpose, upon all occasions, to
give his testimony in behalf of the cause of
God, is guilty of a shameful betraying of
it, becomes thereby a partaker of other
mens sins, and is no more worthy to be
called *his son*.

But of great price in the sight of God are
those persons of high rank and authority, those
gods of the earth, those children of the
most Highest, as the Psalmist stiles them,
Psal. 82. 6. who in the midst of a crooked and
perverse generation, with equal courage and
wisdom employ that extent of power which
is committed to them, for the promoting of
the honour of Almighty God, *by the punish-
ment of wickedness and vice, and the main-
tenance of true religion and virtue.* How
abundantly will the continual dew of the
divine blessing be poured upon them! How
amply will they be rewarded with that ho-
nour which comes from God only! whose
express determination it is, *1 Sam. 2. 30.*
*Them that honour me, I will honour; and they
that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed.*

S E R M. *Fourthly*, Another duty arising from the
 VIII. relation of a *Father* which God bears to us,
 is Love.

Behold, saith St. *John*, 1 Epist. 3. 1. *what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.* So great is his love, that the intimate affection, the tender bowels of parents towards their dearest off-spring, are confessedly but a *faint* representation of it, much less commensurate to it. What then shall we render to him, for the gracious effects of his love? Here St. *John's* argument offers itself, 1 Epist. 4. 19. *We love him*, or it is our bounden duty to love him, *because he first loved us*: We cannot refuse to do so in the midst of such endearments, without deservedly incurring the imputation of the most shameful disingenuity, the most flagrant injustice, and monstrous ingratitude. If then we consider him as the Father of Beings, by whom we were fearfully and wonderfully made, and curiously wrought in our mother's womb, and who took us out from thence; *as the preserver of men, who was our hope, when we hung yet upon our mother's breast*, Psal. 22. 9. by whom we have been holden up ever since we were born; as the lover of souls, which he impressed with his own image, and made capable of a blessed immortality; especially if we raise our thoughts to the

con-

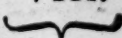
contemplation of that amazing instance SERM.
of his love, when from his own bosom, VIII.
that heaven of heavens, that throne
of majesty, and happiness, and love, he
sent forth his only begotten son into the
world, to take upon him our nature, to
become our brother, to live among us, to
die for us, that he might make us the
children of God; what is the natural fruit
of such affecting meditations, but an hearty
resolution, a fixed and immovable purpose
to make all the returns we are able of a re-
ciprocal affection?

Wherefore every dutiful child of God,
animated with a vital sense of the attrac-
tive and constraining force of his love, will
thereby be certainly determined to remove
out of the way every thing that may inter-
cept or obstruct his union with the beloved,
in whom all the longings of his soul cen-
ter: He will renounce the friendship of the
world which is enmity with God, will
suffer no temptations of pleasure, or wealth,
or honour, to steal away his affections, no
disappointments, or troubles, or losses to
estrangle him from God, the only proper
adequate object of his love, his supreme
and final good; instructed by the devout
Psalmist to break forth into that pious rap-
ture, *Whom have I in heaven, but thee! and
there is none upon earth that I desire in com-
parison of thee, Psal. 83. 25.* Lastly, he will be

S E R M. ever fearful of offending him, ever studious
 VIII. to please him, and to make the words of his
 mouth, the meditations of his heart, and
 the whole course of his actions acceptable in
 his sight.

Fifthly, The Relation of a *Father*, where-
 in God stands to us, is a proper motive of
 Obedience to his Laws, and sincere Repen-
 tance whensoever we have offended against
 them.

The Laws of God, which are the imme-
 diate Rule for us to guide and govern our
 actions by, are not *tyrannical* Edicts, but *pa-
 ternal* Laws; commanding those things
 which are good in their own nature, and
 highly useful and beneficial for us, and for-
 bidding those which are in their own nature
evil, and destructive to us in their conse-
 quences. *His commandments* (saith St. John,
 1 Joh. 5. 3.) *are not grievous*; agreeably to
 what our Lord declared, *Matth. 11. 30. My
 yoke is easy, and my burden is light.* The
 Duties required of us are our *reasonable ser-
 vice*, exactly suited to the reasonable or *hu-
 man* nature; they are cloathed with *exceed-
 ing great and precious promises*, not only of
 the life that *now* is, but of that *other* and
better, which is to come. That we may be
 encouraged to the observance of God's Laws,
 are those exceeding great and precious Pro-
 mises made to us; and that we may be *ena-
 bled to run the way of his commandments*, he
 vouch-

vouchsafeth to us the aids of his Grace, to S E R M.
help our infirmities, to put into our minds VIII.
good desires, to direct and rule our hearts, 
to prevent and follow us, and make us continually to be given to all good works. Here then we have a powerful argument for our Obedience, that our most gracious Father requires nothing of us, but what tends to our present and future advantage, thereby uniting our Duty and our Interest; nothing, but what by his merciful guiding, and blessing our sincere endeavours, he will enable us to perform. Wherefore every dutiful child of God makes the Divine Laws his Meditation and Study, his Counsellor and Delight; in *them* he exerciseth himself day and night, and keeps them with his whole heart; having so kind a Taskmaster, he makes those Impositions easy to himself, which God hath made so necessary for his welfare; he chearfully pursues the happiness which God so mercifully obliges him to, and so graciously directs and so powerfully assists him in the pursuit of, and finds his satisfaction in his duty.

But since, through the frailty of our nature, we cannot always stand upright, and we frequently fall into sin, and offend against God's holy Laws, when this is our case, what shall we do? Shall we sink under the burden of our Sins? Shall we be overwhelmed with Despair? Shall we say in the anguish

SERM. anguish of our souls, *His mercy is clean gone*

VIII. *for ever, and his loving-kindness is shut up in displeasure?* Shall we not rather be desirous, and use our utmost endeavours to be *eased of the mighty load?* Shall we not rather humble our selves before God, and offer to him *the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart?* Notwithstanding our manifold provocations, he *holds fast* his soft and gracious attribute; and though we have forgotten the piety of Children, he will not lay aside the bowels of a Father, if we cast away from us all our transgressions.

If we look into the 15th chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, we shall there find God's readiness to forgive and restore them that are penitent, represented in a lively, instructive Parable. See there a prodigal Spendthrift weary of his Father's government, taking a journey into a far country, and wasting his substance with riotous living: See him reduced to the greatest extremities, wretched without hope, miserable without remedy. But when he came to himself, and considered from whence he was fallen, he determined to arise and return to his Father. See there, how when he was a great way off, his Father, upon the first sight of him, had compassion on him, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him: With what satisfaction and exultation doth he receive, and feast, and cloath him! With what joy and

and triumph doth he reward his late, but SERM.
humble Penitence! Who is this Father, but VIII.
God, gracious and merciful, long-suffering,
and of great pity, stretching out his hands
all the day long to embrace his returning
Children? Would men but suffer this af-
fecting consideration of God's being our
most merciful Father, set forth in this in-
structive Parable, to have its proper influ-
ence upon them, they could not be so stu-
pidly obdurate as to go on in the paths of
Sensuality and guilt, but *the wicked man*
would forsake his ways, and the unrighteous
man his thoughts, and return to the Lord, and
bring forth fruits meet for repentance. And
would they but seriously consider what our
Saviour has declared in the same chapter,
that *there is joy in the presence of God over*
one Sinner that repenteth, they would not
envy an accession to the happiness of the
blessed Angels, which will be a prelude and
certain earnest of their own.

Lastly, The Relation of a *Father*, where-
in God stands to us, engages us to an imi-
tation of his Perfections, in such measures
and degrees as our imperfect nature is capa-
ble of.

This is the ground of *St. Paul's* injunction
to the *Ephesians*, Eph. 5. 1. *Be ye followers*
or imitators of God, as dear children. To
be holy, as he who hath called us is holy, in
all manner of conversation; because it is writ-
ten,

SERM. *ten, Be ye holy, for I am holy; to purify our*
 VIII. *selves, as God is pure; to be just in our deal-*
 ings, to speak the truth from our hearts, and
 utterly to abhor all false ways, because he is
 a God of truth and without iniquity; to do
 good unto all men, because he is good, and
 doth good; to distribute to the necessities of
 others, because a Father to the fatherless is
 God, in his holy habitation; to forgive one
 another, even as God for Christ's sake hath
 forgiven us; in short, to endeavour after a
 Godlike temper and disposition of mind,
 continually to aspire to the resemblance of
 him in all those communicable excellencies
 which are propounded to us for patterns,
 or, in our Saviour's words, *Matth. 5. 48. to*
be perfect, even as our Father which is in hea-
ven is perfect; this is true Religion; this is
 the will of God; this is the indispensable
 obligation, the essential character of his obe-
 dient Children.

And now, to conclude this Discourse;
 since we are the Offspring of God, let us
 affect our hearts with a just and lively sense
 of that high and honourable Relation: It is
 our greatest and most valuable concern, it is
 our wisdom and interest to bring to mind
 what excellent creatures we are, to remem-
 ber and shew ourselves men, to reverence our
 selves, to scorn to do acts unbecoming the
 dignity of the Sons of God, to have our
 con-

conversation in heaven during our short pilgrimage upon earth, and consecrate our bodies and souls, our lives and actions to his service; if ever we hope to be made partakers of that Inheritance to which we were born, and regenerated, and adopted, an *Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven*, 1 Pet. 1. 4. and purchased for us by the merits of Christ, in whom alone we have the privilege to cry, *Abba, Father*, Gal. 4. 6.

But fatal will be our delusion, if we entertain a fancy, that God's being our Father will be of any avail to us, whilst we continue to be *undutiful* children. Against *such* how pathetick is God's complaint, when he solemnly calls to heaven and earth to be astonished at their behaviour. *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider*, Isa. 1. 2, 3. There is more stupidity to be found in *men*, than in *beasts*: the sensual appetite is able to do more with these, than Reason and Religion, than Duty and Gratitude can prevail with the other. But what will be the *end* of this perverseness? what, but a *fearful looking-for of indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish!* Be
not

SERM.
VIII.

SERM. *not deceived; God is not mocked: His father.*

VIII. ly goodness invites all to walk worthy of their heavenly birth and extraction, worthy of the *vocation wherewith they are called*; but if they do otherwise, they will constrain him, who is the eternal pattern of *Justice*, as well as *Mercy*, of a loving Father to become a severe Judge. Instead of that unspeakable Happiness, for which God originally designed them, which yet they refused to accept, and make themselves capable of, they shall *eat the fruit of their own ways*, and inherit the misery, which, with their own hands, they pull down upon themselves. But with those who have approved themselves God's faithful children, and cleaved to him with their whole heart, it shall not be so. *They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him, Mal. 3. 17.* In the great decisive day of Retribution, God will openly shew, who are his and who are not, by making a solemn difference between them: And those who are his precious jewels, his special *treasure*, his *peculiar people*, he will save from that perdition which shall be the dreadful portion of the other. Then shall be accomplished the *glorious manifestation of the sons of God*, which (as St. Paul speaks, *Rom. 8. 19.*) the earnest expectation

expectation of the creature waiteth for. Then, SERM.
according to the infallible Declaration of VIII.
Truth itself, shall the Righteous shine forth
as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father,
Matth. 13. 43.





S E R M O N IX.

Religion the Rest of all that labour,
and are heavy laden.

M A T T H. xi. 28.

Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

SERM.
IX.



THESE words were spoken by our blessed Saviour, and contain in them these Particulars for the Subject of the following Discourse.

First, The Call, or Invitation, Come unto me.

Secondly, The Persons that are called, they that labour, and are heavy laden.

Thirdly, The Reward and Entertainment, and I will give you rest.

As to the first Particular, there is no occasion to insist much upon it; it being an act

act of civility which we scruple not to perform to any one; no one that is called to his Familiar or Equal, will refuse to come, unless he be detained by business of extraordinary haste or consequence; much less will he refuse to come, when he is called by his Superior, his Prince or Master; and I doubt not but we believe our Saviour to be all this, and more to us.

SERM.
IX.

Now this coming to Christ is not to be understood of a real *corporal* coming; it is not a long laborious Pilgrimage, the *compassing of sea or land*, or a painful search through all the corners of the earth. Again; it is not a coming with the mouth or tongue, with flattering promises; this is so far from being accepted, that it hath a curse denounced against it; *Forasmuch as this people draweth near unto me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their hearts far from me; therefore will I proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent shall be hid*, Isa. 29. 13, 14. The coming to Christ must be another kind of address, a coming of the Soul and Heart, *believing and receiving him*: for those three words signify the self-same thing in Scripture. Thus it is said, Joh. 1. 11, 12. *He came to his own, and his own received him not; but as many as received him, to them*

M

gave

S E R M. gave he power to become the sons of God, even to

IX. as many as believe on his name. The like use of the words we may observe at the 5th chapter and 40th verse of the same Gospel, where our Saviour thus tells the unbelieving Jews, *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life; and again, chap. 6. ver. 35, 36, 37. Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst. But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. And once more, at the 44th verse of the same chapter, No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him; which coming is explained at the 47th verse by believing on Christ. It is, with an active operative Faith, to acknowledge him the Lord of our Lives, and the guide of our Actions, with full embraces to receive his Laws and Statutes, and with all readiness and cheerfulness to obey his Will.*

Thus we see the *coming* to Christ is not the Flattery of the Tongue, not the crying *Lord, Lord*; nor saying, *Hail, Master!* for Judas who *betrayed* him, did this: Nor further, is it the assent of the Understanding to the truth of the Gospel; for *the Devils believe and tremble*. But it is the election of the *Will*, the conviction of the active practical

tical part; and it must be so entire, so perfect a coming to Christ, that we forego all things else; for, (as he expressly declareth, *Matth. 10. 37.*) *Whoso loveth father, or mother, or brother, or sister, more than him, is not worthy of him.* Further; it must be a foregoing of ourselves, a readiness to lay down our lives for his sake; for whoso will come after Christ, must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow him, *Matth. 16. 24.* Again; the way that leads to him is strait and difficult: *Strait* (says he) *is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth to life, and few there be that find it,* *Matth. 7. 14.*

SERM.

IX.

How miserably therefore do they deceive their own souls, who think that this duty of coming to Christ is only a matter of Science and Speculation, that an impudent Presumption and Reliance on the Mercies of God, that a strong Imagination of an Interest in Christ will bring them to heaven! Be not deceived; Christianity is not a dream, a fancy, but a *real warfare*; a warfare wherein we are to fight against our selves, to beat down our bodies, and bring them into subjection, *1 Cor. 9. 27.* to fight not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against spiritual wickedness in high places, *Eph. 6. 12.* Heaven is not a place to receive corruption or uncleanness; whosoever will be a Saint above, must be one here; and vainly doth he expect to be

S E R M. a member of the Church Triumphant, that

IX. never served or laboured in the Militant; or
 entertain hopes of receiving the Prize, that
 ran not in the Race; or of dividing the
 Spoil, that fought not in the Battle. Would
 we come to Christ? it must be through dif-
 ficulty and opposition, through a sea of
 trouble and of danger; nay, if it be his blef-
 sed will, through a sea of our own blood.
 Thus is he, the Captain of our Salvation,
 gone before, and thus he expects that we
 should follow after; upon these terms is his
 Invitation grounded, *Come unto me all ye
 that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will
 give you rest.* Which leads to the considera-
 tion of the second Particular,

The Persons that are called, or to whom
 the Invitation is sent, *They that labour, and
 are heavy laden.*

Our Saviour calls not to his feast the
 wealthy Purchaser, for he hath *bought a
 Farm, and must go and see it*; nor the traf-
 ficking dealer of this world, for he hath
*bought droves of oxen, and must go and prove
 them*; but he calls the *poor* and the *maimed*,
 the *halt* and the *blind*; he searches for guests
 in the highways and hedges; *these* he com-
 pels to come to his Supper; as you may see
Luke 14. 23. But may it not seem a very
strange command, to bid them that labour
 and are heavy laden, to undertake to come to
 him,

him, people much fitter for quiet and repose? May not this rather seem a Scoff, than an Invitation, signifying no more than this; If the weary traveller that is not able to move a step forward, may go to his Inn; if the over-laden slave that is not able to stand beneath his burden, can bear it to the place where he is appointed to lay it down, then may you find rest to your souls; according to the manner of speech in the 13th chapter of *Jeremy*, and the 23d verse. *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil.* But however God in his jealousy and just indignation against Sin, may sometimes, as it is expressed in the book of *Proverbs*, Prov. 1. 26. *laugh at our calamity, and mock when our fear cometh;* yet when he speaks to us in his Son, he cannot then forget the bowels of a Father, or look upon our misery without a tender and compassionate regard to it. That faithful and merciful High Priest, who vouchsafed to be tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin, cannot but be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, Heb. 4. 15. Therefore may we safely apply to our selves the encouragement given to the blind man, *Mark* 10. 49. *Be of good cheer, for he calleth us:* Nor need we wonder at the strangeness of the call; he that can make the *Lame* to walk, that commanded *Lazarus* to come forth out of

SERM. his tomb, when he was bound hands and
 IX. feet with grave-cloaths, and more than that,
 ~~~~~ fetter'd in the chains of death; he that can  
 give life and motion to rottenness, and make  
 the silence of *death* answer to his voice; he  
 that can do these things, and more than  
 these, can surely, with his call, enable the  
 sickly faint passenger to arise and come to  
 him, the weary to run his course like a Giant  
 refreshed with wine, and the heavy laden to  
 bear his burden.

But that we may more distinctly know,  
 who they are that are designed and aimed at  
 in this call, we must remember that Sin is  
 expressed in Scripture under the notion of a  
*load or burden*. Thus *Psal.* 38. 4. the royal  
 Prophet complains, *My iniquities are gone  
 over my head, and as a weighty burden, they  
 are too heavy for me.* And very justly is Sin  
 entitled to that name; for it is a weight so  
 vast and heavy, that it can sink us down,  
 both souls and bodies, into the lowest cham-  
 bers of the bottomless Pit; it is a servitude  
 so full of toil, so very wearisome, that every  
 Sinner seems to have begun his Hell upon  
 earth, and to be punished for his wicked-  
 ness whilst he committeth it; according to  
 that expression in the book of *Wisdom*, 5. 7.  
*he wearieth himself in the way of wickedness  
 and destruction; he is a slave to as many  
 tyrants, as he hath members, and thoughts,  
 and passions; he is laden with impurity,*  
 with

with vanity, with malice, and overwhelm-  
ed with the terrors of an affrighted Con-  
science; he is consumed with envy, set on  
fire by lust, rent asunder with faction and  
discord, disturbed with anger, and disorder-  
ed by a whole *body of sin and death*.

Yet so deplorable, so miserable an object  
as this is, doth the compassion of God de-  
light to behold and pity; he graciously re-  
trieves this child of darkness from the pre-  
cipice and brink of ruin, in order to trans-  
form him to an Angel of light, that *where  
sin hath most abounded, grace should much more  
abound*.

But this is not the whole qualification  
for this gracious Invitation of Christ, to  
come to him. Besides the weight and bur-  
den of Sin, we must find labour, and pain,  
and trouble in it. To be a Sinner, is not a  
sufficient title to these mercies; there is  
then this farther requisite, that we be *weary*,  
as well as heavy laden; for what is transla-  
ted *Labour* in the text, signifies properly the  
*Lassitude* and *Weariness* which is caused by  
labour.

To be *weary* then of our sins, is to nau-  
seate and distaste them, earnestly to desire  
to discharge the dregs of that bitter cup,  
which with so much greediness we swal-  
lowed down, to hate and abhor, to revenge  
ourselves upon ourselves, to be *ashamed and  
confounded, because of the reproach of our  
youth*,

SERM. *youth*, Jer. 31. 19. Yet farther, we must be

IX. sure, that all this be no *fit*, or *transient humour* of repentance; for be our zeal never so hot, if it be not regular and equal, we must conclude it not to be our virtue, but *disease*, to be a *fever*, and not Religion. But if we bring a natural and *lasting* heat, a *radicated* warmth, if we are heartily sorry for our transgressions, if the remembrance of them is grievous to us, and the burden of them intolerable, we may lay claim to the promise of the text; we may come boldly to our Saviour, and he will give us rest.

And sure a bare rest may seem a thing desirable to those that are weary and heavy laden, to be allowed the privilege to pant and breathe, though it were only to enable us to resume our load. What do we refuse to give, or what to suffer, when we are cast upon the bed of sickness, to have a small present respite and ease from pain, though we know that the disease may possibly not be removed, or at best that it may very probably return within the compass of a very small time more forcibly upon us. And thus we see, that *any kind* of rest would be well worth the coming for.

But God's munificence is complete and endless as himself: Every good and perfect gift comes down from him, who is the Father of lights, in whom is no variableness or shadow of turning: The good which he bestows



bestows upon those who come to him, must S E R M.  
 be entire, constant and unchangeable. *To the* IX.  
*weary it is rest; to the heavy laden, an exceeding*  
*and eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. 4. 17. to the*  
*sad it is mirth and comfort, Matt. 5. 4. to*  
*the hungry and thirsty it is a feast and ban-*  
*quet, Matt. 5. 6.* Thus it accommodates it-  
 self to different wants and tastes, and is  
 equally grateful to all. The rest he gives  
 is as wide as eternity, comprehending our  
 present, past, and future state.

Those toilsome burdens, with the weight  
 of which the mournful penitent is hum-  
 bled and brought low, with the sense of  
 which he is so heartily affected, as to turn  
 to God with true repentance, our merciful  
 Redeemer engages to ease him of; the ma-  
 ny grievous sins which from time to time  
 we have by thought, word and deed com-  
 mitted against the divine majesty, which our  
 consciences place in order before our faces,  
 to our terror and amazement, he graciously  
 undertakes to cast behind us, to take away  
 that hand-writing which was against us, and  
 contrary to us, to *blot out*, according to the Pro-  
 phet's expression, *Is. 54. 22. as a thick cloud our*  
*transgressions, and as a cloud our sins, to make the*  
*spotted leprous sinner clean and pure, and ren-*  
*der the defiled polluted one whiter than snow,*  
*Psal. 51. 7.* to heal our wounded spirits,  
 and in the multitude of the sorrows we have  
 in our hearts, to refresh our souls with his  
 comforts;

SERM. comforts; in a word, to bestow upon us

IX. the peace of God in our consciences, for our reconciliation to him, for his remission of our sins, that peace which passeth all understanding, which the world cannot give nor take away. And what a calm must sit upon that soul which is thus purged and purified, thus set at peace, and freed from the weight of *present* ill, and the agonies, the shame and horrors of the past. What tranquillity must fill his mind, who is in this happy situation! when he lieth down upon his bed, and sleep is binding up his senses, with what satisfaction, with what complacency of soul, doth he commend himself to the protection of the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; and when he rises up, what ravishing joys, what earnest of *heaven* dwell upon his breast, and crown each waking thought!

Nor will these comforts leave us, but reach to our third estate, and attend us into the other world. But had we the tongues of men and angels, the language of the *seraphim*, how short would all our rhetorick appear, to express the transcendent joys of that *rest, which remains to the people of God*, Heb. 4. 9. in the next life! This rest is such a scene of happiness, that the very *thought* of it is enough to overwhelm us. It is to have a sense exact to judge all differences, and fortified to bear all degrees and excellencies

lencies of objects, to have those objects *pre-*SENT still, nay more, still flowing and en-creasing from their use. It is to have a soul refined and purified, not puzzled to collect and guess at truths, but enabled at one view to pierce them; to have a body that is no longer *weight*, but all ray and brightness, or in the Apostle's phrase, *a cloathing of immortality and glory*; to have, to be all this, and infinitely more, to enjoy all the felicities of heaven, the charity of that place deriving the whole good of all to every one, and be made partakers of the glorious vision of God himself. This is rest and quiet unspeakable, unconceivable; to this our blessed Redeemer affectionately invites, without exception, all who are grieved, and troubled, and wearied with the burden of their sins; of *this* he giveth all them who come to him with a lively faith and sincere repentance, the strongest and most peremptory assurances.

How highly therefore doth it concern us to take up the resolution of St. *Peter*, who, when our Lord, upon the desertion of many of his disciples, said to the twelve, *John* 6. 67. *Will ye also go away?* returned this answer, *Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the son of the living God.* Others, that lead from him, have the words of *death*, and lead to the paths



SERM. paths of *destruction*. These are seducers

IX. both in manners and doctrine, corrupters of holy conversation and purity of Religion, that call to us to come to *them*. But as the wise man directs, *Prov. 1. 15. My son, walk not thou in the way with them, refrain thy foot from their path.* And to the same purpose, 4. 14. *Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men; avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away.*

Wherefore, to conclude; let us gird up the loins of our minds, cast away every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us: Let our lights be burning, and we ourselves prepared to meet the bridegroom; prepared to come to *him, who is the way, the truth, and the life*, John 14. 6. *He is the way to guide us, the truth to give us light, the bread of life to feed us: He is the way in example, for he hath given us an example that we should follow his steps: he is the truth in promises, for his covenant he will not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his lips; he will not fail to give rest to the weary and heavy laden, who come to him; he is the life in reward; for though the wages of sin be death, yet the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord,* Rom. 6. 23. //

Let us make haste and delay not the time to come to him, let us but set forward, and  
our

our journey shall not be long and tedious; SERM.  
 for he that bids us come to *him*, will come IX.  
 to us, even when we are but meditating and  
 thinking on our journey, when we are yet a  
 great way off, as it is expressed in the parable  
 of the prodigal Son, *Luke 15. 20.* though  
 we have been prodigal spendthrifts, who  
 have consumed our age, our bodies and pa-  
 trimonies in riot and excess. And indeed  
 he did graciously vouchsafe to come to us,  
 when we *were a great way off*: The jour-  
 ney he took was of as wide a distance as  
 earth and heaven. He left the bosom of  
 his eternal Father, the glory he had with  
*him* before the world was, to come to us,  
*for us men and for our salvation.* Yet more;  
 as it is expressed in the book of *Revelation*,  
*3. 20. He stands at the door and knocks, and*  
*if any man will hear his voice, he will come*  
*in to him, and sup with him, and be with*  
*him.* Let us not then be like those savage  
*Gadarenes* recorded in the Gospel, that forced  
 their Saviour to depart their coasts. When  
 he calls, let us not refuse, when he stretcheth  
 out his hand let us regard, that at the great  
 day of final retribution, *when the son of man*  
*shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels*  
*with him, and he shall sit upon the throne of*  
*his glory, and all nations shall be gathered be-*  
*fore him, as he declareth, Matt. 25. 31, 32.*  
 we may not be found in the number of those,  
 who shall be set on his *left hand*, and instead  
 of

SERM. of that loving compellation, *come unto me,*  
 IX. shall have that terrible sentence of eternal  
 condemnation pronounced upon them, *Luke*  
*13. 27. I know you not whence you are; depart*  
*from me,* or as the word used by the Evan-  
 gelist imports, stand off, get you from me,  
 without hope of ever approaching again, *all ye*  
*workers of iniquity.* That this may not be  
 the dreadful case of any of us, let us readily  
 obey this gracious, this happy call, a call  
 to rest, that neither age shall take from us,  
 nor us from it; a rest which thieves and  
 violence shall not be able to break through  
 and ravish from us.

*To the enjoyment of which glorious and eter-  
 nal rest, God of his infinite mercy bring us all,  
 for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ, to whom  
 with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be a-  
 scribed all honour and praise, might, ma-  
 jesty and dominion, now and for evermore.  
 Amen.*







## S E R M O N X.

The Witnesſes of the Being and  
Goodneſs of God.

---

ACTS xiv. 17.

*Nevertheless, he left not himſelf without wit-  
neſs, in that he did good, and gave us rain  
from heaven and fruitful ſeaſons, filling our  
hearts with food and gladneſs.*



THESE, and the foregoing words, S E R M. X.  
were ſpoken by St. Paul and Barnabas to the men of *Lyſtra*,  
a city of *Lycaonia* in the *Leſſer*  
*Asia*, and the occaſion of them  
was this. When at *Iconium* there was an  
aſſault made, both of the Gentiles and alſo  
of the *Jews*, with their Rulers, to uſe  
them deſpitefully, and ſtone them, they  
were aware of it, and fled unto *Lyſtra* and  
*Derbe*, cities of *Lycaonia*, according to  
Chriſt's command to his Diſciples, *When*  
*they*

S E R M. *they persecute you in one city, flee unto another, Matth. 10. 23. And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. The same heard Paul speak; who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. This miraculous cure made such an impression upon the people, that they lift up their voices, saying, in the speech of Lycaonia, The Gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Then the Priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. Which when the Apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of, filled with indignation and disdain, they rejected this vile idolatry, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, mortal men like your selves, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities, that is, Idols, unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: Who in times past suffered all nations (that is, all the Gentiles, in contradistinction to the Jews, to whom alone were committed the oracles of God)*

to walk in their own ways, to walk by the SERM. mere light of Nature, unassisted by Revelation. X. Nevertheless, even in the dark state of Heathenism, he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. These are so many witnesses deposing in his behalf.

Now the Duty owed to a Witness, is to consider and take notice what it is that he delivers, and to receive his testimony: To refuse to do this is acknowledged to be manifest injustice, although the matter attested be only some ordinary transaction between man and man. But certainly far greater heed is to be given, when almighty God becometh a party, and the case in question is not any private right of ours, but the greatest affair in the world, his Praise and Glory. Indeed, so worthy of the thoughts of a reasonable creature is the consideration of Nature, for its own sake, that the wisest persons in all ages have employed themselves in it; but how much more deserving of all thought and esteem is it, when it is advanced to so high an employment, as to be subservient to the Glory of God, and has so honourable a character impressed upon it, as to be a visible evidence of his eternal Power? But, to speak more particularly:



SERM. The first Testimony pointed at in the text  
 X. is, That God did good. *He left not himself*  
 without witness, in that he did good.

This very deservedly is put first, it being the original character stamped upon the Creation; for *God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good. Gen. 1. 31.* And howsoever a fruitful harvest of Evil, like tares among the wheat, sprung up in the world, yet he, according to the language of the Parable, *Matth. 13. 24.* sowed only good seed. He (as the author of the book of *Wisdom* expresseth it, 1. 13.) *made not death, neither hath he pleasure in the destruction of the living; for he created all things that they might have their being: and the generations of the world were healthful, and there is no poison of destruction in them, nor the kingdom of death upon the earth. But ungodly men, with their works and words, called it to them: for when they thought to have it their friend, they consumed to nought, and made a covenant with it, because they are worthy to take part with it.* We see then that all evil is a monstrous birth; it is the issue of him, who was a destroyer and murderer from the beginning. And as it is the first Testimony given to God in the text, that he *doth good*, so is it the clearest evidence of the wicked one, that he *doth evil*; so that when the enquiry shall be made concerning us, *whose we are, and to whom*

we belong, the resolution will be from SERM.  
hence, and so also our reward or punish- X.  
ment.

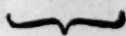
Many *other* excellencies there are, where-  
by the Divine Majesty hath manifested him-  
self to us, as his Power, his Wisdom, and  
Justice, but none has he displayed so emi-  
nently as his *Goodness*; this is his *beloved* at-  
tribute, which rejoices over all his works.  
He is *good unto all*, and *maketh his sun to rise*  
*on the evil and on the good*, Matth. 5. 45.  
Thus have we seen the evidence of the first  
Witness. The

*Second is, That he gives us rain from hea-*  
*ven, and fruitful seasons.* Rain is a treasure  
which almighty God keepeth in his own  
disposal, as we may see in all those grants  
and withholdings of it which are recorded  
in holy Scripture. This is in a very expres-  
sive manner set down in the 14th chapter of  
the Prophet *Jeremiah*; it begins thus, *The*  
*word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah con-*  
*cerning the dearth.* *Judah mourneth, and*  
*the gates thereof languish, they are black un-*  
*to the ground, and the cry of Jerusalem is*  
*gone up.* *And their nobles have sent their*  
*little ones to the waters, they came to the pits*  
*and found no water, they returned with their*  
*vessels empty: they were ashamed and con-*  
*founded, and covered their heads.* *Because*  
*the ground is chapped, for there was no rain*  
*in the earth, the plowmen were ashamed, they*

SERM. covered their heads. Yea, the hind also calved  
 X. in the field, and forsook it, because there was  
 no grass. And the wild asses did stand in the  
 high places, they snuffed up the wind like dragons: their eyes did fail, because there was  
 no grass. And at the last verse the Prophet  
 breaks forth into the following important  
 questions; *Are there any among the vanities  
 of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can  
 the heavens (of themselves) give showers?  
 Art not thou he, O Lord our God? Therefore  
 we will wait upon thee: for thou hast made all  
 these things.*

Lest this Testimony should seem faint,  
 and unable to direct us to the supreme Cause  
 of it, God sends it down from *heaven* to us,  
 where having so strange a generation, con-  
 ceived and born in the thin air, and de-  
 scending from thence, it cannot but instruct  
 us from *whence* we must expect *that* and all  
*other* blessings, Whosoever shall consider,  
 that vapours raised from water or moisture  
 should be lifted up towards heaven, there  
 condense into clouds, become a canopy over  
 our heads, and ride upon the wings of the  
 wind; then, dissolved into showers, mix  
 with the thirsty earth, *satisfy* (as it is ex-  
 pressed in the book of *Job*) *the desolate  
 ground, and cause the bud of the tender herb  
 to spring forth*; make all nature verdant and  
 flourishing, gay and ornamental; whosoever  
 shall consider this, must needs accept the  
 clear



clear Testimony which hereby is given to SERM.  
Almighty God, who thus manifests himself X.  
by *giving rain from heaven.* 

To this is added, That he *giveth us fruitful seasons.* Those Seasons are, we all know, Winter and Summer, Spring and Autumn.

To begin with the Winter, that Season which appears naked, and destitute of all ornaments; then the sap and vital moisture retires, that it may with strength and vigor issue forth, when influenced by the approaching Sun. In this Season God sends his Frost to seal up the surface of the earth, that the heat which is required to the generation of Plants, may be withheld from flying out: At the same time he *giveth snow like wool*, Psal. 147. 16. to fructify the earth by sheltering the corn, and other vegetables, from the intenser cold of the air, and especially the cold piercing winds. After this, comes on the Spring, at whose approach what a strange alteration appears! The Air grows warm and temperate to cherish the tender Plants, and the Sun shines with moderate heat to bring them out. The world puts on a new face, and every thing seems revived. To this succeeds the Summer-season, whose stronger and more vigorous heat advances the blossoms of the Spring into fruits. And lest that heat which is required to ripen the fruits of the earth,

S E R M. should be prejudicial to its inhabitants, it  
 X. hath pleased the Divine Wisdom to provide  
 ~~~~~ blasts of wind to cool the air, and cleanse  
 it from those unhealthy impressions which
 otherwise the scorching heat would occasion. To this succeeds the Autumn, when
 the presses gush out with new wine, and the
vallies stand so thick with corn, that, in the
 Psalmist's elegant phrase, *Psal. 65. 13. they
 seem to laugh and sing.*

Thus doth God *crown the year with his
 goodness*, *Psal. 65. 11.* every part of it still
 producing some new testimony, whereby he
 may awaken our inattentive minds, and animate us to a thankful acknowledgment of
 his favours. And farther to recommend
 these mercies to us, even these Seasons, and
 all their beneficial Fruits, he sends from
 heaven too: His Sun, that great minister of
 his Providence, of so inconceivable a distance
 from this earth, bringing to us all the
 varieties of the year, and the increase of it;
 whose motion is constant, and uniform, and
 unwearied; by his presence he gives daylight
 for our labours, and heat for the vital support
 of us, and all things besides. To this succeeds
 the Night, no less necessary for us to recruit
 our Spirits wasted with the labours of the day,
 and to refresh the earth with coolness and moisture.
 And here, can we forbear calling to mind, and in our
 thoughts dwelling upon that rapture in the
 19th

19th Psalm? *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work. Day to day uttereth speech, and night to night sheweth knowledge: There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard; their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world: In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race: His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.* Thus clear, thus acknowledged by all the world is this second Testimony given of God, his *rain and fruitful seasons.*

But the Apostle doth not think it sufficient, that in the mouth of two Witnesses only his words should be established; but he produces a whole cloud of them, and tells us, that *it is God*, who, to the preceding mercies, superadds yet more and greater; *he fills our hearts with food and gladness.*

The husbandman may fill his ground with seed, and have the several Seasons of the year pass over it, yet it may be blasted, and come to nothing. It may bring forth fruit, and he may fill his barns with it, yet he may not have power to eat thereof; for the *Preacher* hath observed, that such an *evil disease there is*, which he had seen *under the sun*, and it is common among men, Eccles. 6.

SERM. I, 2. Or if sorrow sits upon his spirits, and
 X. grief possesseth his soul, what taste or appetite can he have to meat, or what relish in his drink, when he mingleth it with continual weeping? To redeem us from this, there is this crowning mercy added, to have *our hearts* not only *filled with food*, but *gladness* too, to have our bodily repast answered by a feast in the mind. So that we evidently see, how great and numerous Witnessess are brought in from the Creation and other Benefits of God, in *his behalf*. And can we here refrain from taking up the Song of the *three Children*, and calling to the whole world, as to a full choir, to sing the praises of its *Lord and Maker*, to *bless him*, and *magnify him for ever*? Shall the meanest creatures give testimony to God, and shall *we* be *silent*? Shall they hourly speak to us, and we all the while pay no regard to them? Shall they, as it were, with importunate offers present themselves to our eyes, our taste, and our smell, call out to every faculty, and whithersoever we turn ourselves, pursue us still, and we yield to no impression?

When God spake to the children of *Israel* on *Mount Sinai*, out of the midst of the fire, the people could not endure the terror of his voice, but desired that *He* would no more speak to them, but that *Moses* might, and then they would *hearken* and *obey*. As
 he

he condescended then to that people, so hath S E R M.
 he from time to time to the whole world; X.
 he speaketh to mankind by the most fami-
 liar creatures; all the friends of our nature,
 all those ministers which God hath employed
 about us to feed and nourish us, and to do
 us good, are made his embassadors, thereby
 to endear their message to us.

If it be said, that these are the rudiments
 of the *world*, that this is to preach *nature*
 instead of *grace*, that we have now much
clearer light than that which *nature* can
 yield, that the *Scriptures* are our guide, and
 the glorious splendor of the sun of righteouf-
 ness is risen in our hearts: to this we may
 return the answer which our blessed Saviour
 made to *Nicodemus*, John 3. 12. *If I have*
told you earthly things, and ye believe not:
how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly
things?

There are, if we may so speak, two books
 of the divine word; God declared his mind
 in the one by his inspired penmen of the
 Scriptures: the other he immediately deli-
 vered from himself in his works of creation,
 when he spake and they were made, when
 he commanded and they were created. And
 whosoever seeth not the legible characters
 of the one, how is it to be imagined that
 he should apprehend the other? Nor is it
 to be thought, that the book of God's
 written word hath abrogated the more an-
 cient

SERM. cient volume of the creation. For that on
 X. all occasions refers and gives testimony to
 this, every where calling upon us to meditate upon the *works* of God. *Moses* begins the Bible with an account of the Creation; as the *Christians* their Creed with a profession of their belief in God, as *maker* of heaven and earth, *that* being the best ground of all Religion. If we turn to the book of Psalms, we shall find many of them enlarging upon this subject: If we pass on to the Prophets, we shall see them upon occasion appealing to the works of the Creation, and sending us to the ox and the ass for instruction, and calling heaven and earth to witness. Nor did our Saviour take a *different* method; but he admonisheth us to consider the lilies of the field, the ravens, the grass, and, in short, cloaths almost all his divine discourses in parables, whereof the greater part is taken from those inferior natures which are here about us.

Though the *Christian* institution abstracts from earth, yet in the highest part of our religious service, the blessed sacraments, it makes use of the most obvious creatures to exhibit the divine treasures which Christ hath been pleased to bestow upon his Church. Thus as the Apostle saith, *that the law is spiritual*, Rom. 7. 14. so may we in like manner say, that the universe itself is also spiritual, to unfold the mysteries of which,

we

we need only compare these two books of SERM.
the divine word together. Thus when our X.

Lord stileth himself the bread that came down from heaven, the water of life, the vine, the word of God, the resurrection and the life, the way and the door, can we think that by those expressions it is not intimated to us, that whether we eat, or drink, or speak, or live, or die, whithersoever we turn ourselves, whatsoever we do, we may have a type and representation of him still before our eyes? Do we look upon the ground we tread on, and are we not immediately put in mind of that declaration in Scripture, *Gen. 3. 19. Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return?* Do we view the grafs and the flowers of the field, and do not the words in the Prophet *Isaiab, 40. 6.* occur to us, which inform us, *that we are of no more assured continuance than they?* All flesh is grafs, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field; the grafs withereth, the flower fadeth. Do we warm ourselves at our fires, and is not that question of the same Prophet, *33. 14.* put to us, *who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?* Do we make use of, or cast our eyes upon the water, and doth not that passage of St. *John's Gospel, 3. 5.* offer itself to our thoughts, *except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God?*

Do

SERM. Do not the sparrows and swallows that
 X. nest about us, teach us assiduity and diligence
 in the house of God, from the Psalmist's
 allusion to them, *Psal. 84.* where he says,
*My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the
 courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth
 out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath
 found an house, and the swallow a nest for
 herself, where she may lay her young; even
 thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my king and
 my God. Do not the Ravens of the fields
 teach us God's providence, from our Sa-
 viour's words at Luke 12. 24. Consider the
 ravens: for they neither sow, nor reap, which
 neither have storehouse nor barn; and God
 feedeth them: how much more are ye better
 than the fowls? And lest we should think
 that any creature is not useful to this pur-
 pose, the little Ant is able to read us an ex-
 cellent lecture of good husbandry, from the
 words of Solomon, Prov. 6. 6. Go to the Ant,
 thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be
 wise.*

I might produce many more instances
 of this kind; but I shall now observe to
 you a further advantage, which is this, that
 from the consideration of the creatures, and
 whatsoever occasionally presents itself to us,
 we may furnish ourselves with a rich stock
 and treasure for meditation and thanksgiving.
 Accordingly I shall instance in the great
 employment of the world, husbandry; on
 which

which if we do but *think* a little, we shall S E R M.
 be apt to call to mind that of the Psalmist, X.
Pf. 136. 5, 6. They that sow in tears, shall reap
in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth,
bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come
again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves
with him; or some one of those many para-
bles of our Saviour concerning that subject,
or else those allusions to it, which the Apo-
stles frequently make in their Epistles; as
that, 1 Cor. 3. 9. We are labourers together
with God, ye are God's husbandry. Or that
at Heb. 6. 7, 8. The earth which drinketh in
the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth
forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed,
receiveth blessing from God. But that which
beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is
nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burnt.
Or that of James 5. 7, 8. Be patient, bre-
thren, unto the coming of the Lord: Behold,
the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit
of the earth, and hath long patience for it,
until he receive the early and latter rain. Be
ye also patient, stablish your hearts: for the
coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

I shall mention one passage more, which
 we find 1 Cor. 15. 36, &c. *That which thou*
sowest is not quickned, except it die: and that
which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body
that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance
of wheat, or of some other grain. But God
giveth it a body, as it hath pleased him, and

to

SERM. *to every seed his own body; and then at the*

X. 42d verse, *so also is the resurrection of the*
dead; it is sown in corruption, it is raised in
incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is
raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is
raised in power. That is, you cast your
 seed into the earth, which a long while lies
 there buried; but yet you give it not over
 for lost, but expect that it should arise mul-
 tiplied to you; so yourselves, though you
 go down to and lie forgotten in your graves,
 shall arise again renewed and glorious. Here
 then affect your souls with content, with
 joy and thankfulness, that God hath been
 pleased so to provide for us his unworthy
 creatures, that we should not be as the beasts
 that perish, or such as have hope only in
this life; adding to this an act of faith and
 confidence in God, and assuring yourselves
 in the words of holy *Job*, ch. 19. ver. 25, 26,
 27. *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he*
shall stand at the latter day upon the earth;
and though after my skin, worms destroy this
body; yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom
I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold
and not another: though my reins be con-
sumed within me. We see how naturally
 pious meditations flow from this ordinary
 occupation of life; the like will arise from
 any other action, from any other object that
 we employ our thoughts, or cast our eyes
 upon. Thus may our *secular* business be
 sanctified

sanctified to us, and *earthly* things so far S E R M.
made *spiritual*, that instead of withdrawing X.
our minds *from* heaven, they may lead us *thither*.

To conclude: Every creature in the world is the work of God's hands: How is it then that we so often, so perpetually look upon them, nay, *enjoy* and *use* them, without so much as one reflexion upon *him* the cause of all? Were our minds filled with *suitable* apprehensions of him, we should set a *greater* value upon him in those his images and resemblances which he hath left amongst us as *his witnesses*, and be very far from turning away our thoughts from him. But if we *will do so*, the time will come, when *he* will turn away his face from us. As we would not acknowledge his image in his creatures, he will not acknowledge it in us, but declare to us in those dreadful words, *I know you not*. They that in this life have, with the rich man in the Gospel, *unthankfully* received *good* things, shall with him also receive as great a share of *evil*. He that now gives *rain* from heaven, will *then* rain *fire* and *brimstone*, as he did upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*: He that now giveth *fruitful* seasons, will then afflict with *everlasting burnings*: He that now filleth the heart with *food* and *gladness*, will then fill it with *endless grief* and *despair*.

But

SERM. But may Almighty God of his infinite
X. goodness avert *these* things from us; and
may we *so* remember his *judgments*, that we
may not hereafter *feel* them *poured out* upon
us, and make *so right* an use of his *mercies*,
that we may not turn them into *judgments*;
so conduct ourselves with regard to his *crea-*
tures, those *witnesses* of *him*, that they may
not hereafter *witness* against *us*: Finally, *so*
receive the testimony of this *corruptible*
world, which shall wax old as a garment,
and melt with fervent heat, that our por-
tion may be in that *new* heaven and *new*
earth, which our Lord hath promised, where-
in dwelleth *righteousness*, in *his* presence,
with whom there is no variableness or sha-
dow of turning, but joy and gladness for
evermore.





S E R M O N XI.

God's Providence to the People of
this Nation.

Preached Nov. 5, 1738.

ISAIAH V. 3, 4.

*And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and
men of Judah: judge, I pray you, betwixt
Me and my Vineyard.*

*What could have been done more to my Vine-
yard, that I have not done in it? Where-
fore, when I looked that it should bring forth
grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?*



IN the beginning of this chapter S E R M.
we find represented to us, under XI.
the familiar parable of a Vine-
yard, God's peculiar care of his
chosen people the Jews, and
their undutiful behaviour towards him.

O

Now

SERM. Now (says the inspired Prophet) *will I sing*
 XI. *to my well-beloved a song of my beloved, touch-*
ing his Vineyard: My well-beloved hath a
Vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And he
fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof,
and planted it with the choicest Vine, and built
a tower in the midst of it, and also made a
wine-press therein: And he looked that it
should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth
wild grapes. This being the case between
 God and his People, he was pleased to
 make them judges in their own cause. And
 now, O inhabitants of *Jerusalem, and men of*
Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt Me and
my Vineyard. Wonderful, surely, was the
 condescension of the Almighty, that he
 should thus appeal to the Tribunal of *man,*
 for the equity of his own Proceedings; pa-
 rallel to which is that affectionate expositu-
 ration of his recorded by the Prophet *Micah,*
Mic. 6. 3. O my people, what have I done to
thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? Tes-
tify against me. He then proceeds to enquire
 of them, whether he had been defective in
 any one instance of his care over them;
What could have been done more to my Vine-
yard, that I have not done in it? And sub-
 sequent to that he asks with astonishment,
Wherefore, when I looked that it should
bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild
grapes?

As to the figurative scheme of speech SERM.
here used, it is so frequent both in the Old XI.
and New Testament, and so evidently de-
signed to represent the Church, whether of
the *Jews* or *Gentiles*, that to attempt a
proof or illustration of it, were entirely su-
perfluous.

This being premised, I shall in my fol-
lowing Discourse enlarge upon these two
things:

First, The exceeding great care the Al-
mighty hath taken of his Vineyard: God en-
quireth of his people, What could have been
done *more* to his *Vineyard*, that he hath not
done in it?

Secondly, The ill return which the *Vine-*
yard makes to its *Master's* care: God so-
lemnly complains, That when he looked it
should bring forth *grapes*, instead of them it
brought forth *wild grapes*.

The exceeding great care the Almighty
hath taken of his Vineyard will appear, if
we consider how, with a stretched-out arm,
by the ministry of his servant *Moses*, he
brought his Vine out of *Egypt*; then, by
the hand of *Joshua*, he cast out the hea-
then, and planted it; and lastly, by the
means of Judges, Kings, and Prophets, he
made room for it, and caused it to *take deep*
root, 'till it *filled the land*; 'till the hills were

SERM. covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs

XI. thereof were like the goodly cedar trees; till she sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river, according to the elegant description, *Psal.* 80. The particulars of which mighty improvement we have abundantly and fully offered to our view in the four last books of *Moses*, of the *Chronicles* and *Kings*, and other parts of the sacred History.

If we pursue the figure to the dispensation of the Gospel and Christian Church, when the *eternal Son of God* became the *true Vine*, the stock from which the whole plantation was to increase and multiply, and *God the Father*, as it is expressly declared in *St. John's Gospel*, *Joh.* 15. 1. became the *Husbandman*, we shall discover the exceeding great care and industry of the Almighty continued still, with fresh improvements. Christ, the unspotted *Lamb of God*, came down from heaven to manure the ungrateful soil with his own most precious blood. *The Sun of righteousness* (according to the Prophet *Malachi's* prediction) arose, with healing in his wings, like the material Sun, to dispence his comfortable rays and kindly influence, that nothing might be hid from the heat thereof.

The more particular ways of culture, by which this great plantation of God's Vineyard, in its large extent, hath been preserved,

served, I shall not enquire into, thinking it SERM.
sufficient to offer a view of it in the won- XI.
derful blessings of Heaven to this National Church, especially in the two signal Deliverances which are the subjects of this day's religious offices.

And first, we cannot but observe God's providential care over this National Church, in its strange escape out of the thick mist of Error, wherewith it had been for many ages surrounded, into the glorious light of the Gospel, by the signal blessing of the Reformation; how from the absurd enclosures of the *Roman* Pale, the contradiction of a particular Catholic Church, it was reduced to the fellowship of that one just legitimate Community, the Universal Church of Christ; how the great Master of the Vineyard, by the subservient industry of a Woman's hand, our glorious *Queen Elizabeth*, amidst the various oppositions of open enemies from without, and secret from within, fenced it, and picked out the stones thereof, and crowned it with such eminent and distinguishing favours, as demonstrated it to be that Vineyard which his own *right hand* had planted.

Then it was that Truth, which had been miserably obscured by the Traditions of men, shone forth in its own native lustre, purged and refined from the corruption and dross of Idolatry, and all manner of Superstition;

SERMON; the Holy Scriptures, which had long
 XI. lain imprisoned in an unknown Tongue,
 were opened for the use and benefit of all;
 the indisputable right of Christians to judge
 for themselves in matters of Religion, which
 our Fore-fathers had been deprived of by
 the false and insolent, but, for many ages,
 established claim of the absolute Authority
 of the Church of *Rome*, was firmly secured
 to them; and the Honour and Worship,
 which is due to God alone, ceased to be im-
 piously transferred to Saints and Angels, to
 Stocks and Stones.

Immediately after the throne of these
 Realms was filled with that most excellent
 Queen, whom God ordained to be the In-
 strument of the Reformation, and Defender
 of his true Religion, the Pope of *Rome* sent
 out his *Bull* and deposed her, declaring that
 it was his Will and Command, that she be
Anathematized, that she be deprived of her
 Governments, that her Subjects be absolv-
 ed of their Oath of Allegiance, and pre-
 sume not to pay her any obedience; conse-
 quent upon which was a Rebellion in the
North, and various secret attempts of the
Papists to take away her life. Nay, thrice
 was the sentence of Deposition issued out a-
 gainst her by three Popes, to shew how
 much they had at heart her destruction, and
 the extirpation of the Protestant Religion.
 But it pleased God to confound their de-
 vices,

vices, and disappoint their mischievous designs, and *no weapon formed against her, prospered.* — But the Spirit of Popery is ever

SERM.
XI.

restless; its pride is not to be abated, nor its malice asswaged; like a roaring Lion, it is *always going about, seeking whom it may devour.* For when the Almighty took her to himself, full of years and glory, of whom our Fore-fathers said, *Under her shadow we shall be safe,* and placed upon the throne King *James the First*, the enemies of our Religion cast their heads together with one consent, and were confederate against him. By a Mandate of *Clement the Eighth*, he was pronounced incapable of holding the Crown, because he was an Heretick, that is, in other words, a *Protestant*, and his subjects peremptorily required not to pay him their duty and obedience. In consequence hereof, many malignant Papists, Jesuits, and Seminary Priests, conspired most horribly (*I recite the words of the Act for a publick Thanksgiving to almighty God on this day*) when the King's most excellent Majesty, the Queen, the Prince, and all the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, should have been assembled in the upper House of Parliament, suddenly to have blown it up with Gunpowder; an invention so inhuman, barbarous and cruel, as the like was never before heard of, and was (as some of the principal Conspirators

SER M. thereof confessed) purposely devised and concluded to be done in the said house, that
 XI. where sundry necessary and religious laws for preservation of the Church and State were made, which they falsely and slanderously termed cruel laws made against *them* and their Religion, both place and persons should be all destroyed and blown up at once.

The vault was dug, a magazine of powder laid in, great iron bars were laid over; there was an engineer at hand, the match was ready laid, it was sized for an hour, a fatal hour, of this morning, the fifth of *November*, in a minute of which, in a moment, all the governing part of this nation, and God knows how many more, all that had come within the reach of it, were to have been blown up. Lord! what a thunder-clap had it been to this poor Church and Nation? What an earthquake would it have made through all *Europe*? What a fatal blow to the Protestant Religion, both here and all the world over? It was a blow that would have been felt to all posterity*.

But, blessed be God, while these execrable Plotters encouraged themselves in mischief, and communed how they might lay snares privily, saying, *Who shall see us?* he suddenly shot at them with a swift arrow;

* Bishop *Lloyd's* Sermon at Whitehall Nov. 5, 1689.

yea, and made them fall by their ownSERM.
tongue; he, whose eyes are upon the ways XI.
of men, and who pondereth all their go-
ings, he, to whom hell itself is naked, and
destruction hath no covering, he discovered
this mystery of iniquity, this hidden treason,
not many hours before the appointed time
for its execution. Blessed be God, that he
did not give our forefathers over for a prey
to their implacable and blood-thirsty ene-
mies, that their souls escaped as a bird out
of the snare of the fowler; the snare was
broken and they were delivered; that the
wicked were snared in the work of their
own hands, and fell themselves into the
pit which they had made for others.

It has also pleased the divine providence,
whose compassions fail not, to make this
day memorable by another eminent instance
of his loving-kindness.

We have heard with our ears, and our
fathers have told us, what a melancholy pro-
spect they had before their eyes, how their
hearts failed them for fear, and for looking
after those things which they had too much
reason to apprehend were coming upon them,
for the dread of those two greatest evils that
can befall mankind, the subversion of their
rights and liberties, and the oppression of
their consciences, the dread of arbitrary rule
and popish superstition, under the reign of
a prince excessively bigotted to the one, and
obstinately

SERM. obstinately bent to introduce and establish
 XI. the other. He assumed a power, to which

he had no just claim, to dispence with the laws, the only foundation of the subjects security; and in order to maintain that power, he set up a standing army without, and against the consent of parliament. Jesuits as well as other popish priests were publicly encouraged by him, Mass-houses were publicly opened, and various artifices made use of to bind upon the necks of the people the insupportable yoke of *Romish* tyranny, to bring them under a spiritual, as well as civil bondage, and thereby inflave their souls, as well as their bodies. These and many other grievances, which need not be particularly enumerated, were a clear, uncontroulable evidence of a fixt design to dissolve the legal constitution, and root out the Protestant Religion from amongst us.

From these apparent dangers God in his abundant mercy rescued our Church and Nation, by raising up a deliverer, and giving his late majesty king *William*, whose memory ought ever to be precious to us, a safe arrival here, and prospering his generous undertaking in behalf of an injured people, and making all opposition fall before him, till the great, long wished-for Revolution was accomplished, whereby they were again settled upon the ancient foundations of the legal government in Church and State.

This

This providential period ought to be had by us in perpetual remembrance, because it was the great foundation of the happiness and security we at this time enjoy; for to *this*, under God, was owing the settlement of the Crown upon the Protestant branches of the Royal Family. *This* settlement we have seen take place, after many attempts of false Protestants in conjunction with real Papists, to defeat and shake it. We see a Protestant king upon the throne; we see a numerous race of descendents from him, who we hope and trust will by an uninterrupted succession govern these kingdoms, steadfastly maintain the Protestant faith pure and undefiled, distribute justice with an impartial hand to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and the support of religion and virtue, be the delight of their friends, and the terror of their enemies as long as the moon endures.

If we reflect on *these* instances of God's exceeding great care of his vineyard, which he hath planted amongst us, and on many others which cannot but occur to our thoughts, we may conclude, that although it is not possible to limit an almighty agent, and to say to his ocean of munificence, thus far canst thou go, and no farther, yet *this* we may resolve, that we cannot assign any thing *more* that could be done for us, than he hath *already* done: If we will act in
pursuance

SERM. pursuance of the commission he hath

XI. granted us, if, as he hath graciously condescended even to *request* of us, we will judge between him and his vineyard, we must pronounce, after our strictest enquiries, that there appears not to us any one particular that might be done to it, to secure and fence it, to cultivate and adorn it, which he hath not done in it.

I now proceed to the *second* thing proposed in this discourse, the ill return which the vineyard makes to its Master's care: God solemnly complaineth, that when he looked it should bring forth grapes, instead of them it brought forth *wild* grapes.

Some indeed have represented Almighty God, as a rigid, sparing husbandman, one who expects to reap where he hath not sown, and to gather where he hath not strewed. But surely they understand very little of God, who can entertain *such* a notion, no less injurious to his justice, than derogatory from his honour. He did, as we see apparently in the case before us, all that was required, nay more, all that was possible to be done! *What*, saith he, *could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?*

Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 9. 7. and we may be allowed to add, looks not for fruit at the proper season? Indeed,
after

after much toil and culture spent upon it, it S E R M. may yield no fruit at all; but this, how- XI. ever it be a very *unwelcome* disappointment, is not a *final* one. The husbandman comforts himself with this reflexion, that some unlucky blast, some failure in the season of the year occasioned this misfortune, and that perhaps the *following* vintage will doubly supply the miscarriage of the *last*. But in the case before us, there is no room for hope, no ground for expectation; the *wild* clusters give a too convincing proof of what they *are* or *can* be.

We see then here a great, a monstrous, and a final disappointment. *The vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.* The fruits which God in reason expected in return to his industry and culture, were strict honesty and impartial justice, and the fruits he reaped were vile corruption and oppressive violence, the grapes of *Sodom* and the clusters of *Gomorrhah*.

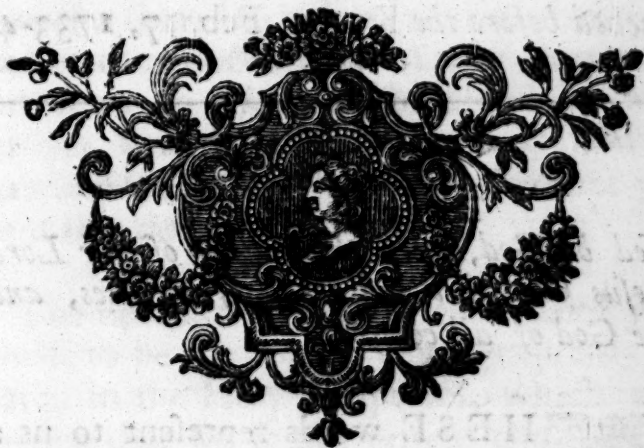
And now, upon a faithful survey of ourselves, can we *deny* the charge of the text? Can we say, when God hath looked, hath a long while expected, that we should bring forth grapes, that we have not brought forth *wild* grapes? Rather with confusion of face

SERM. will also command the clouds that they rain no
 XI. rain upon it.

That this may not be *our* case, how highly doth it concern us all, as the publick demerit of the nation, and our own private guilts require, to break off our sins by righteousness! Miseries removed, benefits conferred, judgments threatned, our obligations, our interest, our duty, our God jointly invite us to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and let us for once be so wise as to hearken to their call. Let us all, high and low, rich and poor in our several relations put away from us the evil of our doings, and turn to the Lord our God, that, according to the Prophet's expression, we may be his *pleasant* plant; that mercy and truth may not only meet, but dwell together with us, and righteousness and peace not only kiss each other, but salute us too; *that truth may flourish out of the earth, and righteousness, delighted with the prospect, look down from heaven; that the Lord may shew lovingkindness, and our land give her increase*, Psal. 85. 10, 11, 12. that he, who, as on this day, delivered our Church and Nation from the unnatural conspiracies of their blood-thirsty enemies, from Popish tyranny and arbitrary power, and made their devices to be of none effect, and hath since wonderfully preserved us from great and manifold perils of a like nature, may still crown us with
 his

his favour, protect us by his power, and S E R M.
rejoice over us to do us good. **XI.**

*Happy are the people that are in such a
case, yea, blessed are the people who have the
Lord for their God, Psal. 144. 15.*





S E R M O N X I I .

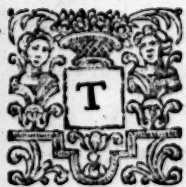
The Duty of Blessing God, and the
Motives to it.

Preached before the KING, Feb. 17, 1733-4.

2 COR. i. 3.

*Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord
Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and
the God of all comfort.*

S E R M .
X I I .



THESE words represent to us a Duty, together with some weighty reasons enforcing it. The Duty is that of blessing God ; which surely we are under the strongest engagements, the most endearing obligations to discharge in the best manner we are able: For he is the author of all good; he is the immense ocean from whence all our shallow rivulets flow; and is it not meet and right that

that we return our borrowed waters back S E R M.
again to him? that we ascribe blessing to XII.
him, upon whom all our hopes and ex-
pectations of welfare and happiness de-
pend?

The Reasons wherewith the Apostle en-
forceth this duty of blessing God are, his
being *the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*
the Father of mercies, and the God of all com-
fort. I shall

First, Briefly speak of these in the order
wherein they lie before us, and then pro-
ceed to the consideration of the Duty itself,
and shew in what manner, and by what
persons, God is not blessed; and how he
may be blessed; and who they are that per-
form this duty aright.

The necessity of believing our Lord Jesus
Christ to be the Son of God is expressly de-
clared in the Holy Scriptures, which were
written that we might *believe that Jesus is*
the Son of God; and that believing, we might
have life through his name, Joh. 20. 31. We
cannot indeed understand the *manner* of his
generation, *how* the whole Divine Essence
was from the Father alone, by eternal ge-
neration, communicated to God the Son,
what that Glory was which Christ testifies
he had with the Father before the world was,
Joh. 17. 5. that is, in the language of Scrip-

SERMON, *from everlasting*: This is among the
 XII. *secret things which belong to God*, Deut. 29.

29. This is knowledge too excellent for us; we cannot attain to it. It is enough, abundantly enough for us, to know that God, the first Person of the Holy Trinity, is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that Christ by nature is the begotten of the Father; that to none else but God the Father this Paternity belongs, and to none else but God the Son this Filiation belongs. Instead of entering into difficult Speculations, and perplexing our selves and others with curious Disquisitions, it is far better for us to affect our souls with a warm and vigorous sense of this comfortable Truth, That *God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and be thereby induced to bless him, who is the Spring of so much happiness to us, by being the Parent of so blessed a Son; a Son, in whom by a voice from heaven he declared himself to be *well-pleased*, Matth. 3. 17. whom, *according to his own purpose and grace*, 2 Tim. 1. 8. in the fulness of time he sent forth from his own bosom to take our mortal nature upon him, and be born of a pure Virgin, in order to reveal his will to mankind, *to give knowledge of salvation to his people for the remission of their sins; to give light to them that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide their feet into the way of peace*, Luke 1. 77. A Son, through
 whose

whose all-sufficient Merits we are entitled to S E R M.
 an Access to God, even the Father, and to XII.
 the inestimable privilege of Adoption, and
 becoming *the sons of God*, Gal. 3. 26. and
if sons, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint
heirs with Christ, Rom. 8. 17.

The Mother of our Lord, filled with joy and transport, declared concerning herself, *from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed*, Luke 1. 48. and shall a less obsequious office be performed to his heavenly Father? Shall not all generations, all men in those successive generations, call him blessed? If we honour him who descended from the height of Majesty, and *came down from heaven, not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him*, John 6. 38. shall we not honour the Father, by whom he was sent? Shall we not magnify the love of God towards us, which was *manifested in this, because that God sent his only begotten son into the world, that we might live through him?* 1 Joh. 4. 9. And if it was predicted of Christ, the *brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person*, that *all kings should fall down before him, all nations do him service, and with united voices call him blessed*, Psal. 72. shall less attribution of blessing be paid to his eternal Father?

Secondly, Another reason why we ought to bless God, is, because he is *the Father of mercies*. Mercy is his genuine offspring; he

S E R M. challenges it as proper to himself; he de-
 XII. lights, he glories, he triumphs in the exer-
 cise of it; he is not only a merciful God,
 but a God of numerous and manifold mercies: The bowels of *Isaac*, though he was a Father, were not sufficient to satisfy the importunate desires of *both* his sons: *Haft thou but one blessing, O my Father*, is the complaint of *Esau* in the bitterness of his soul, *Gen. 27. 38*. It is not so here; the mercies of God are diffusive, they communicate themselves to the various wants and imperfections of his creatures, and are extended over all his works, like the soul in the body, animating the meanest and most distant parts. To *man*, his *last* work, the masterpiece of the whole visible creation, he appears to be rich in mercy, if we consider, that he it was who formed us after his own image, endowed us with reasonable souls capable of knowing and acknowledging, of loving and adoring him, and wrought all the curious parts and members of our bodies; that when our parents thought not of us, and no friend had means to help us, he nourished us in the womb; and afterwards, when we came forth into this world, protected us yet hanging upon our mothers breasts; that when we were destitute of all strength and succour, so far from being able to relieve our wants, that we could not so much as name or express the least of them,
 when

when we were thus helpless in all our in-
 fancy, and not much better in the many
 years of our childhood, he provided us with
 all things suitable and convenient for us,
 and gave us means of education; that he
 still preserves us in being, having ordained a
 great variety of creatures to minister to our
 use, and serve our necessities; that he hath
 conducted us through difficulties, rescued us
 from dangers which we had not foresight to
 prevent, nor strength to withstand; and
 when any of us have languished upon the
 bed of sickness, and our life hath hung in
 doubt before us day and night, that he hath
 restored us to our former health: Or again;
 if we consider, that *he maketh his sun to rise
 on the evil and on the good, on the just and on
 the unjust*, Matth. 5. 45. that *he hath not
 dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us
 according to our iniquities*, Psal. 103. 10. that
 he spares, when we deserve punishment, and
 exercises patience and long-suffering to us-
 ward, that, if it be possible, he may attract
 to himself our stubborn tempers, and lead
 us to repentance, and amendment of life. But
 above all; how did he abound towards us in
 the riches of his mercy, by *sending his son
 into the world, for us men, and for our salva-
 tion*, to seek us when we had gone astray,
 to redeem us when we were utterly lost and
 sold to work wickedness, to lay down his life
 for us, when we were dead in trespasses and
 sins,

SERM. *fin*s, to make us partakers of the means of

XII. Grace in this world, and the hopes of Glory in that which is to come! The Redemption of mankind by our Lord Jesus Christ, with its happy consequents, is such an exuberance of mercy, which human measures can by no means estimate, which human thoughts can by no means comprehend, and which could only flow from the boundless compassions of our gracious God.

Filled with a lively sense of the divine Mercies towards him, the Royal Prophet, with admiration and amazement cries out, *Psal. 144. 3. Lord, what is man, that thou hast such respect unto him; or the son of man, that thou so regardest him?* And may not another question be very properly asked, *What is man, if he doth not regard, if he doth not bless that gracious God who hath so regarded him, who hath been so plenteous in mercies towards him?*

Thirdly, Another reason why we ought to bless God is, because he is *the God of all comfort.*

The Apostle here styles him *the God of all comfort*, because by graciously bestowing that inestimable gift of the Holy Ghost, *the Comforter*, he is the source of all the consolation wherewith the souls of his faithful servants are refreshed.

Our blessed Lord had told his Disciples, that upon his departure from them into heaven,

heaven, they should endure much trouble, SERM.
should be persecuted, delivered up to bonds XII.
and imprisonment, to death it self for his
name sake. But he bids them *be of good
cheer*; he opens to them an agreeable pro-
spect of a *blessed Comforter*, who should sup-
port their drooping spirits, be always pre-
sent with them, and endue them with a
firmness of mind that no afflictions should
shake and discompose. Accordingly they
became new men; they were animated with
unusual courage and resolution; they preach-
ed before the Rulers of the earth, their suf-
fering Master, and were *not ashamed of the
cross of the one*, nor *afraid of the terrors of
the other*. They were *troubled on every side,
but not distressed; perplexed, but not in de-
spair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down,
but not destroyed*, 2 Cor. 4. 8. Agreeably
hereto the blessed Confessors and Martyrs,
amidst their shame, and anguish, and cruel
treatment, had still the bright irradiations of
comfort from on high, the vital influence of
God's favour and acceptance showered down
upon them. And the same inward consolations
which were dispensed for the support
of Christians, in the ages of persecution,
are still vouchsafed to all true Believers with
regard to their sorrows and troubles, whe-
ther temporal or spiritual; *to strengthen the
weak bands, and confirm the feeble knees*, Isa.
35. 3. *to dispel the fears, to revive the spirit*
of

SERM. of the bumble, and to revive the heart of the
 XII. contrite ones, Isa. 57. 15. to make them hear
 of joy and gladness, such as the world, with
 all its smiles and flatteries, cannot give, nor
 with all its terrors take away; to make them
 humbly acquiesce in the dispensations of
 Providence, how contrary soever to flesh
 and blood, and chearfully resign themselves
 to the Divine Will; and when their dissolution draws nigh, devoutly commend their
 spirits into the hands of their faithful Creator, who is the strength of their heart, and
 will be their portion for ever. Justly therefore may we say with the Apostle, *Blessed be God, the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulations.*

Having thus briefly considered the reasons upon which the Apostle in the text hath grounded the Duty of Blessing God, I now proceed to shew in what Manner, and by what Persons, God is not blessed, and how he may be blessed, and who they are that discharge this Duty aright. And

First, We meet with some, who, instead of blessing God, have not him in all their thoughts, who receive good things from his hand, and yet esteem them as the acquisition of their own labour, or strength, or policy, or the reward of their own peculiar merit; *sacrificing*, in the Prophet Habakkuk's expression, *Hab. 1. 16. to their net, and burning*

burning incense to their drag; as if by them SERM.
their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous. XII.

To such ungrateful men, who render not to God the things that are God's, how justly applicable is that complaint against the Jews by the Prophet *Isa.* 1. 3. *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider:* and again, *Hos.* 2. 8. *She knew not, that is, she would not acknowledge, that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold.*

Secondly, There is another sort of men, who have God in their thoughts indeed, but it is only to dishonour and blaspheme him; who employ his Name, which is great, wonderful and holy, and ought to be had in perpetual reverence, to furnish out matter for their light profane discourse, and bring down God from the highest heavens to witness that, which they would be ashamed to call a *sober man* to attest. How ill, how monstrous is the return for all the bitter sufferings, the wounds and blood-shedding of the Son of God for the sons of men, when they shall have no other use made of them, but to be the subject of Oaths and dreadful Execrations! and how can the presumptuous sinner, in his last extremities, call upon that God to bless and save him, whom he hath a thousand times before, upon every,
upon

SERMON upon no occasion, called upon to confound
XII. and damn his soul?

These are open and notorious violations of the duty of Blessing God: There is beside these, a

Third sort of men of equal guilt, though cloathed with a fairer outside than the other: These are they, who *have the form of godliness*, but are destitute of its power; who amidst their softest flattering words, are full of guile and bitterness within, who *for a pretence make long prayers*, but at the same time make no scruple of *devouring widows houses*; who *draw near to God with their mouths, and with their lips honour him, but have removed their hearts far from him*, Isa. 29. 13.

Thus we find that this Duty of the text, how easy soever it may appear, is by many slighted and violated: Indeed it is not every one that can say with affection, and from the heart, *Blessed be God!* Every wicked man, he whose interest it is that there should be no God in heaven, no *righteous judge of all the earth, to try the heart and reins*, and give to every man according to his works, such a one is so far from being willing that God should be blessed, that he most earnestly desires, most passionately wishes there were no God at all.

Having

Having seen in what Manner, and by SERMON what Persons, God is not blessed; let us XII. now see how he may be blessed, and who they are that discharge this Duty aright. And

First, We bless God when sincerely, and from the ground of the heart, we acknowledge him to be the sole author of all the good we enjoy, and offer him thanksgiving and praise for all the benefits we have received at his hands. Blessing and Praising God are terms of equal importance: Thus in the 145th Psalm, *David* breaks forth into these rapturous strains; *I will extol thee, O God my King, and will bless thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless thee, and praise thy name for ever and ever. My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord: and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.*

As for that glory, which God receives from the praises and acknowledgments of men, we must confess, that such praises and acknowledgments are below the infinite height of his unbounded essence; his state is unchangeable, no way capable of any new addition of honour from any of our services. Yet are they pleasing and acceptable to his Divine Majesty — but for our sakes only, and not for his; insomuch as we thereby endeavour to answer the gracious end and design of his bestowing his favours upon us, and

SERM. and act as becomes grateful creatures, over
 XII. whom he rejoiceth to do us good. Full
 therefore of a true sense of his unspeakable
 goodness, we will *bless the glorious name of
 God, which is above all blessing and praise,*
 Neh. 9. 5. we will summon all our powers
 and faculties to give thanks to him, as holy
 David did, *Psal. 103. 1, 2. Bless the Lord,
 O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his
 holy name: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and
 forget not all his benefits.* And indeed the
 discharge of this Duty of Praise and Thank-
 giving is the highest pitch human frailty can
 arrive at: In other acts of divine Worship,
 we aim at our own benefit, we beg some-
 thing from Almighty God, either the relief
 of our necessities, or the averting of judg-
 ments, or the vouchsafement of mercies;
 only in praise and thanksgiving we offer
 something to him. That this is the very
 utmost power and energy of our nature, ap-
 pears from hence; that the blessed souls of
 Saints made perfect, and equal to Angels,
 have that Angelical Office for their great
 employment and exercise, receiving new
 and fresh felicities, and as duly acknow-
 ledging their just resentments of them. *They
 rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy,
 holy, Lord God almighty, which was, and is,
 and is to come. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to
 receive glory, and honour, and power, for
 thou hast created all things, and for thy
 pleasure*

pleasure they are and were created. Rev. 4. SERM.
8, 11. XII.

Secondly, We may bless God in his name; when we take it into our mouths with fear and reverence, and acknowledge and declare it to be holy, and speak not of it but with due apprehensions of its transcendent excellency; when, according to our respective abilities, we sincerely and zealously endeavour, that it may be more blessedly dealt with and honoured by others, that it may be glorious above all the world, that it may be called upon by all nations, and become the praise of the ends of the earth.

Thirdly, We may bless God in his friends, his children and servants. Since he hath retained to him relations that are capable of receiving both benefits and injuries from us, our actions will, in their reflexions, reach to him; as we see *Matth. 25. 40.* where our Lord hath distinctly told us, concerning alms and charity to our brethren (whom he is not ashamed to call *his own*, Heb. 2. 11.) *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.* So we read, *Acts 9. 4, 5.* that when *Saul* breathed out threatnings and slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord, *he heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.* They who persecute the fol-

SERM. followers of Christ, persecute Christ, and
 XII. he looketh upon what is done against *them*,
 as done against *himself*. In like manner every
 deed of bounty, which we extend to our
 neighbours, rests not in *them*, but spreads it
 self abroad and renders God our debtor; ac-
 cording to the declaration of the Wise Man,
 Prov. 19. 17. *He that hath pity upon the
 poor, lendeth unto the Lord. He lendeth even
 to him, whose is the earth, and the fulness
 thereof, by bestowing his alms upon those
 whom God hath appointed his substitutes to
 receive them.*

It is observable that *Blessing* signifies, in
 Scripture, those gifts and mutual benefits
 which pass betwixt man and man. Thus,
 Gen. 33. 11. *Jacob says to Esau, Receive, I
 pray thee, this Blessing from thy servant;*
 meaning the Present which he sent him. So
 1 Sam. 30. 26. where we read that *David
 sent of the spoil to the elders of Judah, say-
 ing, Behold a Present for you of the spoil of
 the enemies of the Lord;* in the margin it is,
Behold a Blessing. And in the New Testa-
 ment this same word signifies Alms and Li-
 berality, our gifts and beneficence to our
 poor brethren, as we may see, 2 Cor. 9. 5.
 And indeed, upon very good grounds, this
 Act is called *Blessing*; it being not only a
 bestowing of a blessing upon our neighbour,
 and doing it for God's sake, so as to have
 him acknowledge himself the debtor for
 what

what we thus bestow, as being done to his SERM. XII.
Relations, but being also the most effectual
way of immediate attribution of glory to
God. For thus St. Paul tells the *Corin-*
thians, 2 Cor. 9. 12. *the adminstration of this*
service not only supplieth the want of the
saints, but is abundant also by many thank-
givings to God, while by the experiment of
this ministration they glorify God for your
professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ, and
for your liberal distribution to them, and to
all men.

Nor are we by the Duties of Alms and
Charity only to bless God, but

Fourthly, Every transaction of our lives is
to bear a part in it. *Whether you eat, or*
drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the
glory of God, saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 10. 31.
And 1 Cor. 6. 20. *Ye are bought with a price,*
therefore glorify God in your body, and in
your spirit, which are God's.

In a word; in order to the faithful dis-
charge of this duty of blessing God, there
must be the employment of the whole man
in all his relations; we must study to ap-
prove ourselves to him by a chearful sub-
mission to his Providence, an unfeigned
piety and uniform obedience to his Laws;
by temperance, and sobriety, and chastity,
in reference to ourselves; by justice, truth,
and universal charity to our neighbours.
This was the very design, and primary end

Q

of

SERM. of the Gospel Dispensation: *The grace of*
 XII. *God (saith St. Paul) which bringeth salvation,*
 hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that
 denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we
 should live soberly, righteously and godly in this
 present world; looking for that blessed hope,
 and the glorious appearing of the great God
 and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave him-
 self for us, that he might redeem us from all
 iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar
 people, zealous of good works, Tit. 2. 11, 12,
 13, 14. And as for this reason the Son of
 God was pleased to die, so for it also did
 the Father give him up to death, and after-
 wards raise him from the dead. God (as we
 read, Acts 3. 26.) having raised up his Son
 Jesus Christ, sent him to bless you, in turning
 every one of you from his iniquities. The
 blessing he gives us, is to turn every one of
 us from our iniquities, and therefore unless
 we are turned from our iniquities, we are
 not blessed our selves, and consequently have
 no interest in the merits of Christ, nor title,
 cause, or motive to bless God for them.

Let us therefore fit ourselves, by purity
 of life, for this most pure and sacred work
 of blessing God: Let us lift up our grate-
 ful hearts to him, and shew forth his praise,
 not only with our lips, but in our lives, by
 giving up ourselves to his service, and by
 walking before him in holiness and righteouf-
 ness all our days: that so, having in the best
 manner,

manner, and by all the ways our condition SERM.
in this world is capable of, blessed *the God* XII.
and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Fa- ~~~~~
ther of mercies, and the God of all comfort,
what is now our duty, may hereafter be-
come our recompense, and we may with
Angels, and Archangels, and all the com-
pany of heaven, for ever ascribe Blessing to
God, and be for ever blessed with the glo-
rious vision of him, who is the fountain of
all happiness, *in whose favour is life, in whose*
presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right
hand are pleasures for evermore.





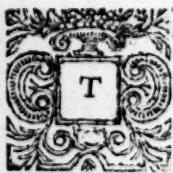
S E R M O N XIII.

The Parable of the foolish rich Man.

LUKE xii. 20, 21.

But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.

SERM.
XIII.



THESE words are the close of a Parable spoken by our Saviour, the occasion of which we have at the 13th verse of this chapter, which was this. Whilst Christ was preaching to the people concerning the mysteries of salvation, and the eternal inheritance with God in heaven, one of the company, it seems, more affected with the care of his patrimony on earth, interrupted his discourse, and said to him, *Master, speak to my*

my brother, that he divide the inheritance SERM.
with me. To this impertinent demand Christ XIII.
returned a sharp answer, and from thence
took occasion to give a general advice against
that sin, which made this person and
also most others unfit hearers of God's
word; it is the sin of covetousness, which
either so wholly possesseth the soul, that
nothing besides itself can find admittance
there; or if any seed by chance should
fall upon the ground, it is presently over-
run and choaked by those thorns and briers,
the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness
of riches, as we may see in the parable of
the Sower, *Matt.* 13. 22. But because the
bare admonition to beware of covetousness
was not likely to be a remedy strong enough
against so stubborn an evil, he enforced it
with a parable of a certain rich man, which
we see at large at the 16th, 17th, 18th, and
19th verses of this chapter, and concluded
it with the words of the text—*But God
said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul
shall be required of thee, then whose shall those
things be, which thou hast provided? So is he
that layeth up treasure for himself, and is
not rich towards God.* Wherein,

First, We may observe the stile and title
fixed upon this rich man, not such as the
flattery of the world is used to bestow, as
honour, and excellence, and worship, but

SERMON. such as his conduct better deserved, *thou*
 XIII. fool.

Secondly, We have this enforced and justified by a short account both of him and all his wealth, expressed in the following words, *This night shall thy soul be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?*

Thirdly, we have our Saviour's application of this parable, *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.*

I begin with the *first*, the stile and title fixed upon this rich man, *thou fool*. And here we may previously observe, that to be a Fool in the language of Scripture generally signifieth the want of moral and practical knowledge, to commit folly being all one as to commit sin. When Moses, Deut. 32. 17. cries out against the wickedness of the children of Israel, *that they sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom their fathers feared not*, he introduces this charge of idolatry with this pathetick expostulation at the 6th verse, *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise?* Of the same people God complains by the Prophet Jeremiah, chap. 4. 22. *My people is foolish, they have not known me, they are sottish children, and they have no understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they*

they have no knowledge. When Solomon, Prov. 7. represents the desperate simplicity of a young man, beguiled with the flattering words of a young harlot, he saith of him, verse 22, 23. *He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks: till a dart strike through his liver, as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.* St. Paul, Rom. 1. speaking of their wickedness who held the truth in unrighteousness, who though they knew God, yet glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened, he fixes upon them this character, *professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.* And indeed there is very just ground for this way of speech, errors of life and practice being the greatest obliquity and deviation from right reason, that any one, upon whom the image of God is impressed, can be guilty of, as being a joint and complicated failure of both the superior faculties, the understanding and the will, as being the most dishonourable instances of folly, a cheat and fallacy put upon us by our inferior bestial part, wherein we are led aside by our animal faculty; and lastly, as being the most dangerous, hurtful folly, whereby, for transitory joys and trifles, we bereave ourselves of infinite and

S E R M. eternal goods, and betray our souls to no
XIII. less infinite and eternal evils.

But in order to display the particular folly of the covetous, voluptuous man, let us take a view of the whole parable, whereby it will more than appear, how justly he deserved the stile and compellation of a fool.

The parable begins thus. *The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully, and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?* Here we have an evident instance of the folly of his ingratitude; he doth not so much as think of God, whose clouds dropt fatness upon his ground, to whose bountiful hand he oweth all his plenty. How much better did holy *Job*, in the days of his prosperity, who, when his substance was increased, expressed his thankfulness to God, by enlarging his charity to men; *for he was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, and a father to the poor*, chap. 29. 15, 16. But this rich man, instead of saying, what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me, instead of considering what he shall do to relieve the necessities of the distressed, which is the retribution God requires for temporal blessings, as if all had been given him for his own use only, he thought upon nothing but himself, saying,

ing, *what shall I do, because I have no room* S E R M.
where to bestow my fruits? And herein he XIII.

surely betrayed no small want of foresight, to be to seek for the stowage of his harvest, when it was time to reap it. To plow, and sow, and painfully manure the earth, and have the seasons of the year pass over it, and after all, when the corn expects the sickle, *then* to be at a stand, and not to know what to do with it; this surely is an argument of weakness and indiscretion, or want of good management at least. At last he resolved with himself, and said, *This will I do, I will pull down my barns, and build greater:* where we may observe, if it argued weakness not to know where to bestow his fruits when they were ripe for harvest, surely it is an evidence of greater to think *then* of building barns and granaries, but of much more, to pull down those that are already built: If he wants room where to lay up his swelling stores, *what* can it be but frenzy to pull down those that he hath at present? Barns then he wants, and resolves when he hath built them, *there* to bestow his fruits and his goods: which words, if they are measured by the ordinary language of the world, seem to have nothing blameable in them; but upon an indifferent view it will appear, that what he boasts of as *his* fruits and *his* goods, are in truth not so. For they are indeed the fruits
of

SERM. of the earth; they are God's good creatures, XIII. for the disposal of which, as a steward, he is put in trust, and must give an account of his management of them to him the bountiful bestower of them. They may, 'tis true, if well employed, become *his* fruits, that is, if he be as fruitful in the works of charity, as the ground was with grain; they may be made *his* goods, but only upon this condition, if he do good with them; but then they must not be laid up in barns and storehouses; they must not be preserved to pamper the private lust of one, but scattered on the wants of many, be faithfully dispensed to feed the hungry, to cloath the naked, and make the orphans and the widows hearts to sing for joy.

But the rich man goeth on in his resolution: I will say to my soul; *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry.* He might with greater reason have said, O my soul, thou hast a gracious God, a merciful father, who hath blessed the labours of my hands, my going out and my coming in, and increased my substance; now therefore, filled with a warm and vital sense of his manifold mercies, with all thy powers and faculties praise, and honour, and adore his holy name. This had been a proper expression of his gratitude to God: but, fool as he was, he had not a thought of this; he measured happiness by
the

the gratifications of the flesh, and the enjoyments of sense; and therefore he determines with himself thus; *I will say to my soul.* Where first he fondly imagines, that it is but saying the word, and all is done; as if he were master of that omnipotence which called the world out of nothing, which spake to the several ranks of nature, and they were made, commanded and they were created. But this is no new thing under the sun, but a common and most frequent evil; when men are flushed with prosperity, they think nothing beyond their reach, but impiously expect all the world to be controuled by their breath.

Secondly, We may observe the rich man's words run thus, *I will say*, that is, when he hath finished his buildings, *then* he will, but not *till then*. And were it not a wiser course to enjoy himself immediately? If there be such happiness in eating, and drinking, and being merry, why doth he lose so much time, why doth he defer his enjoyments to he knoweth not what uncertain day? But this is the universal cheat which the devil puts upon all covetous men; somewhat or other is still wanting, and when *that* cometh, then all will be well; there will be an end of all care and solicitude, nothing to be met with afterwards, but ease and rest. This sum is to be made up, that piece of land to be purchased: *then* they shall have a competency,

SERM. petency, and will seek for no more; but
 XIII. when with much toil and labour these things
 are compassed, the same wants appear as
 before, some new convenience arises and
 presents itself to their view, and engageth
 their pursuits, and so will still from time
 to time, till the unexpected interruption of
 a summons from death cuts them off, and
 puts a period to them and their designs.
 Such an hydropick malady is the thirst of
 riches, that it increaseth still as it is quenched,
 and the more and larger draughts are
 taken down, the more violent is the drought,
 the more earnest the longing after fresh
 supplies. *Thirdly*, we may observe the rich
 man addresseth to his soul thus; *I will say*
to my soul; as if he were proprietor and
 possessor of his soul, that he could justly
 call it *his*. We know what the Apostle
 tells us, *Rom. 6. 16. To whom ye yield your-*
selves servants to obey, his servants ye are
to whom ye obey, and what our Saviour hath
 observed, *John 8. 34. Whosoever committeth*
sin, is the servant of sin; and then let any
 one imagine, how far that man, who is
 enslaved to every base proposal of his sense,
 to every cheap enticement of his appetite,
 and is the idolater of his wealth, is from
 having his soul in his own hands, and,
 what the Prophet *David* mentions as a
 particular gift of God, *from having his heart*
at liberty.

From

From this view of the form and manner S E R M. of the rich man's intended address to his XIII. soul, let us in the next place enquire into the *matter* of it, *what*, after all this deliberation, he hath to say: *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry*: Where not to insist upon that declaration of our Saviour at the 15th verse of this chapter, which is fully verified by experience, *that man's life, the support, the comfort and the happiness of his life, consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth*, and to take no notice at present of his error in conceiving that his goods would last with him for no less time than many years, which I shall have occasion to speak of more particularly afterwards, we cannot but discover that gross, palpable mistake of his, his imagining that the fruits of the earth are the goods of his soul, that his immortal part is to take its ease on beds of down, and to rise happy from a luxurious entertainment; as if sensual delights, which the vilest of beasts are as capable of as we, were the proper satisfactions of that eternal substance of which we partake with glorious spirits. But, O fool, is this the joy of thy soul? Is this the provision thou makest for her? Can thy silver, thy gold, the fatness of thy grounds, the fulness of thy barns, the plenty of thy corn, and wine, and oil afford her any true content?

SERM. content? Is thy soul, that was made to have

XIII. her repast with the food of angels, to be
 fed with spiritual manna, to be filled with
 that heavenly water, which, as our Sa-
 viour declares, *John 4. 14. whosoever drinks*
of, shall never thirst again, is she to be sa-
 tisfied with earthly enjoyments? Is thy soul,
 that was created after the image of God,
 the glorious stamp of his eternity, the price
 whereof was such, that nothing could ran-
 som it but the blood of the Son of God,
 made an heir of everlasting glory, co-heir
 with Christ Jesus in his kingdom, to have
 the utmost of her happiness set upon taking
 her ease, eating, and drinking, and being
 merry with the vain perishing things of
 this life? Had the rich man acquainted
 her, that she came not from the dust of
 the earth as the body doth, that she was
 not subject to corruption as that is, that she
 is not to fix her hopes on earth, but on
 things that are above, that the joys which
 she is to aspire to, are such as neither eye
 hath seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of
 man is able to conceive; had he told her
 of these things, he had spoken suitably to
 the greatness and privilege of her original,
 and the honour and dignity of her nature.

But spiritual things are too refined for the
 thoughts of Voluptuaries, who are immer-
 sed in the pleasures of sense, and *make pro-*
vision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts there-
of,

of, and esteem nothing worthy of their pursuit, their care and enjoyment, but what attends the bestial part. Tell them of a God, and, if they are not so impudent as openly to deny him, yet secretly in their thoughts they will say, as *David's* fool said in his heart, *there is no God*, Psal. 14. 1. Tell them of the Providential care of God for all his creatures, and they think it a strange thing, that a Being infinitely great and happy in himself, should lessen his Majesty or disturb his Quiet with the multiplicity of human actions; and what is this but, as a wise Heathen charged the old *Epicureans*, in words to own a Deity, but in effect to deny him? Tell them of the service of God, and they are ready to cry out, *Who is the Almighty that we should serve him, and what profit have we if we pray to him?*

Tell them of Religion, and they conclude with the Atheist, that it is but a trick of state to keep subjects in order, or the invention of crafty Priests to aggrandize themselves, and encircle their profession with awe and veneration. Tell them of the rewards reserved for the righteous servants of God, and of the just judgments of God denounced against impenitent sinners, and, in their account, you gravely deliver the dreams and fancies of weak whimsical brains. Tell them of the immortality of the soul, and they will say, *The soul of man is but as the soul*

SERM.

XIII.

SERM. *soul of a beast, which liveth no longer than the*
XIII. *body; and therefore, why are we idle, as it*
 were not knowing what to do? *Why do we not*
eat, and drink, and make merry? These are
the pleasures which are at hand; these are
pleasures that we are sensible of; as for any
other, they are but delusive conceits and chi-
meras: — Come on then, let us enjoy the good
things that are present, and speedily use the
creatures as in youth; let us fill ourselves with
costly wine and ointments, and let no flower of
the spring pass by us; let us crown ourselves
with rose-buds before they be withered; let
none of us go without his part of our volup-
tuousness; let us leave tokens of our joyfulness
in every place: for this is our portion, and our
lot is this. Wisd. 2. 6, 7, &c.

But, to such self-deluding fools as these, are not the words of the royal Preacher justly applicable? *Eccles. 11. 9. Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thy eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.* A solemn declaration, which, if attended to with that seriousness of thought which the high importance of it demands, cannot but at once make the pleasures of the Voluptuous sicken and pall upon the sense, and overwhelm his heart with confusion and amazement.

We

We read in the book of *Daniel*, 5. 6. that S E R M.
when King *Belshazzar*, in the midst of his XIII.
luxurious feast, saw the hand-writing on the
wall, *his countenance was changed, and his*
thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his
loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against
another. Such, or more if possible, may we
suppose the dread and horror of the rich
man in the text to be, who, in the fulness
of all his earthly joys, when he had sung a
rest to his soul, and promised to himself an
happy life for many years to come, on a
sudden, in an instant, heard this fearful
message from God sounding in his ears, *Thou*
fool, this night thy soul shall be required of
thee, then whose shall those things be, which
thou hast provided? Which leads me to the

Second thing proposed to be spoken to,
the enforcement and justification of the title
Fool, given to the rich man, by a short ac-
count both of him, and all his wealth;
wherein we have the unexpected interposi-
tion of almighty God fatally changing the
scene, and clouding all his prosperity with a
black and dismal storm: He that presump-
tuously flattered and delighted himself with
the prospect of many future years of life,
and as many of pleasure, is peremptorily as-
sured by the mouth of God himself, that
the ensuing night will put an end to his
being. *Lo, this is the man that made not God his*
strength: but trusted in the abundance of his

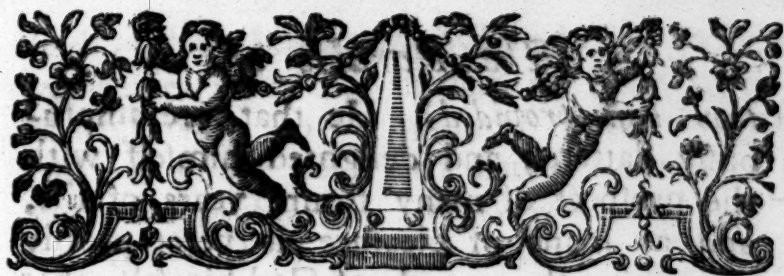
Rriches,

SERM. *riches, and strengthened himself in his wicked-*
 XIII. *ness, Psal. 52. 7. Thus in the case of this*
 { rich man, is the observation of the Wise
 Man verified, *Many devices are in a man's*
heart, but the counsel of the Lord, that shall
stand. Man purposes, but God determines;
 Man contrives and projects for himself, and
boasts himself of to-morrow, not knowing what
a day (a night) may bring forth, Prov. 27. 1.
 But God orders all things according to his
 own pleasure, and brings that to pass which
 he himself will have done.

But the further consideration of this Head
 of discourse, together with our Saviour's ap-
 plication of the Parable, I shall reserve to
 the next opportunity.

Now to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
three Persons and one God, be ascribed honour
and glory, might, majesty, and dominion, for
ever. Amen.





S E R M O N XIV.

The Parable of the foolish rich Man.

LUKE xii. 20, 21.

But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee, then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.

IN my former discourse upon S E R M. these words, I considered the XIV. stile and title given to the rich man, *thou fool*, and from a view of the Parable, shewed how justly he deserved it.

I proceed now to consider the enforcement of this title, by a short account of him and all his wealth in the following words, *This night thy soul shall be required of thee, then whose shall those things be, which*

S E R M. *thou hast provided?* He that presumptuously flattered and delighted himself with the prospect of many future years of life, and as many of pleasure, is peremptorily assured by the mouth of God himself, that the ensuing night will put an end to his being in this world.

And here how large a subject of discourse offers itself! no less a one than the vanity of man, which is observable in nothing more than in his foolishly promising to himself a long continuance of life for the enjoyment of pleasure, notwithstanding he hath no warrant but his own confident assurance, and notwithstanding the manifold and daily instances of mortality, which sufficiently expose the folly of it. Many who are in the vigour of their youth, and the fulness of their strength, never think of death, and therefore boast of nothing so much as of the course they have to run, and the time they have to live; many who are far advanced in years, persuade themselves that they may live a little longer; and so both old and young put the evil day far from them, and form to themselves a thousand projects, as if the issues of things were altogether in their own power.

But to these may we not say in the words of the Psalmist, *Psal. 75. 4, 5. O fools, why do ye deal so madly? Why do ye set up your horns on high? Why do ye make*
such

such proud boasting? Why do ye pride S E R M.
 yourselves with the devices of your own XIV.
 hearts? Why do ye presume upon things
 that ye know not, and flatter yourselves
 with the prospect of events which ye are
 not sure of? *Go to now, saith St. James,*
chap. 4. ver. 13, 14. ye that say, to-day or
to-morrow we will go into such a city, and con-
tinue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get
gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on
the morrow: for what is your life? it is even
a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and
then vanisheth away. And when this tran-
 sient vapour is vanished, when this life is
 required, what will then become of all your
 gains and possessions?

Had indeed Almighty God said only to
 the rich man, this night shall thy *estate* be
 required of thee, that is, had any one of
Job's messengers been sent to him, and
 brought the news, that the *Sabeans* had
 fallen upon his oxen as they were plowing,
 and his cattle that were feeding beside them,
 and slain his servants with the edge of the
 sword; or that fire from heaven had burnt
 up his sheep and servants, and consumed
 them; or that an army had invaded the
 country and plundered him of what was
 left, or that a tempestuous wind had over-
 thrown his buildings, and in their ruins
 buried his dear children, had any of all
 these accidents befallen him, we cannot but

SERMON. know what would become of his goods laid
 XIV. up for many years, and how little need
 there would be of new barns to be built,
 or of his saying to his soul, *eat, drink, and
 be merry.* Or had that farther commission
 been issued out against him, as was against
Job, of putting forth the hand, and touch-
 ing the bones and flesh; had God said, This
 night shall thy *health* be required of thee,
 how useless would his wealth have been to
 him, how far from yielding him any com-
 fort! He could no more have enjoyed his
 goods, than if they had utterly been con-
 sumed and lost. But this requiring of the
 estate and of health, is a way of proceeding
 that allows at least a possibility of return to
 the former good condition. For God re-
 quired of *Job* his goods, his cattle, and
 his children; he required his health, in-
 flicted on him a most painful, sharp and
 noisom malady; but he blessed the *latter end*
 of *Job* more than his beginning. But this
 fatal sentence of the text, this requiring of
 the *soul*, admits no alleviation, or release,
 or possibility of return; this merciless and
 unrelenting stroke is that which nature trem-
 bles at.

O death, saith the son of Sirach, *Ecclus.*
 4. 1. *how bitter is the remembrance of thee
 to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions,
 to the man that hath nothing to vex him, and
 that hath prosperity in all things, yea, unto
 him*

him that is yet able to receive meat: Which S E R M.
 certainly was the case with the person in the XIV.
 text, and therefore doubtless the mention of
 requiring the soul must fall with its full
 weight of anguish and horror upon him.
 And if death, besides its constant terrors,
 comes particularly unwelcome to the rich,
 it surely hath a farther aggravation, when
 it stands as it doth here unavoidably before
 him that he must see and meet it, when it
 is so near as to be sudden, and yet so far off
 as to be expected.

Had it been told him, that he should
 live the space of a *year*, there had been
 some respite yet, though doubtless he pleas-
 ed himself with the view of a much longer
 date; or had the term prefixed to *Nineveh*
 been assigned him, yet *forty days*, and then
 he shall be destroyed; though that time were
 short, yet he might in some sort set his
 house in order. But this very night to have
 his soul required, seems a particular instance
 of severity.

They that were bidden to the marriage,
 of whom we read *Luke 14.* made their se-
 veral excuses; one, *that he had bought a farm,*
and must go and see it; another, *that he had*
bought a yoke of oxen, and must go and prove
them; a third, *that he had married a wife,*
and could not come. And what variety of
 excuses may we not imagine the rich man
 to have made use of to put away this night

SERM. from him! what buying, what selling, what
 XIV. disposing of houses, of lands, of goods, what
 entertainments of friends might he have
 pleaded to keep back this sentence of death,
 or at least to suspend the execution of it!

As *David* in the midst of his troubles
 prayed to God, *O spare me a little, that I
 may recover my strength before I go hence,
 and be no more seen*; so may we not imagine
 the rich man to have prayed thus? *O spare
 me a little, that I may enjoy my pleasures
 before I part with them*; since thou hast
 given me wealth, give me some time to
 taste the sweets of it; either first deprive me
 of my goods, that my death may be more
 welcome to me, or suffer me to live, that I
 may cheer my heart with them: Alas!
 thirty or forty years, what are they to thee,
 to whom a thousand are but as yesterday?
 I ask not for so many; give me but a year,
 a month, a week; let me be freed from the
 horror of *this night*, in which thou hast
 said, *my soul shall be required*. But all that
 he can say or do availeth him nothing; his
 excuses, his prayers, his submissions, his
 expostulations are of no force, cannot re-
 verse the peremptory decree. He is snatched
 away from all his joys, his hopes and expec-
 tations; as he came forth of his mother's
 womb, naked shall he return to go as he
 came, and shall take nothing of his labour
 which he may carry away in his hand, Eccles.

5. 15. And since he must leave his goods S E R M.
behind him, he hath not power to bestow XIV.
them where he pleases, he is not suffered to
know who shall enjoy his labours, who
shall succeed him in his possessions, who
shall gather the riches which he solicitously
heaped up, and in the multitude of which
he presumptuously trusted.

Who is there now so wretched, as to be
content to change conditions with this rich
man? who so slow and short of understand-
ing, as not to apprehend the misery of this
sentence, *this night shall thy soul be required
of thee*, and the unanswerableness of the
question annexed to it, *then whose shall those
things be which thou hast provided?*

But there is yet behind a farther aggrava-
tion of this rich man's misery; not only all
his goods and wealth must be parted with,
and descend to he knows not whom, but
the sin of them will stay and abide with
him for ever; his enjoyments endure but a
little time, but the punishment of them will
remain to all eternity. For it is observable
that the decree of the text, the requiring of
the soul, signifies something more than the
bare separation of it from the body, even
that strict impartial enquiry which is to
pass upon all the thoughts, and words, and
actions of the whole life, or rather the con-
sequence of it, a sentence to a state of mi-
sery in another world; for it is not, *I will*
require

S E R M. require thy soul: (for indeed there is no
 XIV. infelicity in that, if God require it in mer-
 cy, not in judgment; for where can it be
 more happily deposited than in the hands
 of a faithful Creator?) but as we find it in
 the margins of our Bibles, *they* do require
 thy soul, which implies a company or plu-
 rality at least, and those strangers and per-
 sons separate from Almighty God, and
 which will amount to no less than the very
 form of the sentence set down *Matt. 25. 41.*
Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting
fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

It is not in the power of words to repre-
 sent the anxiety, the distress, the horror
 and despair of this wretched person in this
 sad estate. How many thousand times doth
 he wish that he had never been born, that
 he had been placed in the meanest and
 lowest condition of life, rather than have
 been master of such plenty and affluence,
 that he had never known those sinful plea-
 sures and delights which he freely indulged
 himself in the enjoyment of?

But will not some men be apt to say in
 their hearts, all this concerns *us* not? Let
rich men look to it; it is but just, that they
 who have received their good things in this
 life, and did no good with them, should have
 their share of evil things, and hereafter be
 tormented: As for ourselves, we are not
such; we have not so plentiful an increase,
 that

that we know not where to bestow our SERM.
fruits, and therefore have no reason to trou- XIV.
ble ourselves in this matter. To remove
this false opinion, let us in the third place

Consider our Saviour's application of this
parable: *So is he that layeth up treasure for
himself, and is not rich towards God.*

Though the notion of treasures usually
carries our thoughts to an immense heap of
wealth, yet in the language of Scripture it
hath a far lower import: as we may see
*Gen. 43. 23. God hath given you treasure in
your sacks,* and what was that but the price
of the corn which the sons of *Jacob* went
down to *Egypt* for? and that surely was no
very great matter. So *Jer. 41. 8.* it is said,
We have treasures in the field (not of silver
or Gold, or any precious merchandize, but)
*of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of
honey;* and such treasures a man that is not
rich in the eye of the world, may be master
of; according to which sense it is evidently
used by our Saviour, *Matt. 13. 52. Every
scribe that is instructed unto the kingdom of
heaven, is like unto a man that is an house-
holder, which bringeth forth of his treasures,
that is, out of his stores, things new and old.*
We may then take it for granted, that no
other meaning than what is here intimated,
is to be fixed upon this place of the text.
But whether it be in little or much, in a
matter of great or small value, the hiding
and

SERMON. and carefull preserving of it is here meant

XIV. by our Saviour: And indeed that it is so, will yet more clearly appear from the design of this Parable, which we are told, in the 15th verse of this chapter, is against covetousness: *And he said unto them, Take heed and beware of covetousness*; and we know a poor man, in his circumstances, may be as covetous as the rich.

But is it absolutely forbidden to *lay up treasure*, that is, make any kind of provision for the future? if so; how then saith the Apostle, 2 Cor. 12. 14. that *parents ought to lay up*, have somewhat in store, for *their children*? And 1 Tim. 5. 8. *If any provide not for his own, especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel*; as also 1 Cor. 16. 2. *Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by in store, as God hath prospered him*. The truth is, an anxious care is altogether forbidden; yet diligence is so far from being disallowed, that it is made our duty, and as such is proposed to us. Religion is no enemy to honest thrift: Our blessed Saviour, who could make a few loaves a feast for thousands, was punctually careful that the least part of what remained should not be lost, but diligently gathered into baskets, *Joh. 6. 12*. And to oblige us the more to copy after this pattern, the just dispensing of those few talents, with which we are here

en-

entrusted, is made the means of obtaining S E R M.
the rule of many cities, as we see *Luke 19. XIV.*

17. And the trial of our fidelity, what it 
would be in greater matters, is the care we
discover in the lesser. *He that is faithful in
that which is least, is faithful also in much;
and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust al-
so in much; if therefore ye have not been
faithful in the unrighteous Mammon, who will
commit to your trust the true riches? and if
you have not been faithful in that which is a-
nothers, who shall give you that which is your
own, Luke 16. 10, 11, 12.*

If when we are upon trial, and kept in
on the one hand by threats, and on the other
encouraged by promises, we will not do as
we ought, how can we expect to have the
eternal inheritance bestowed upon us, or
once imagine that we are in the least mea-
sure fit for the possession of it? On the
other side, if we approve ourselves good and
faithful servants, we shall be sure of full and
great rewards, such as though they be above
the claim or pretension of our merit, are
proportioned to the infinite munificence of
the gracious hand that dispenseth them.

To treasure up, or lay in store then, is a
matter of a middle and indifferent nature,
which circumstance renders either good or
bad.

As for the qualification of the text, it is
that universal one that interposes in all
worldly

SER M. worldly actions, namely, private interest and
 XIV. advantage, *so is he that layeth up treasure for*
 himself: which restriction is not only to be
 found here, but in the same words upon the
 like occasion, *Matth. 6. 19. Lay not up for*
yourself treasures upon earth, but lay up for
yourself treasures in heaven. The reason of
 which is this: We are all in this world
 Stewards and Husbandmen to almighty God;
 as long as we carefully manage the estate en-
 trusted to us, and dispose of it to those uses
 to which he has designed it, we are looked
 upon by him as good and faithful servants:
 but as soon as we say in our hearts, *the in-*
heritance shall be ours, consult only our own
 private gain and benefit, then we manifest
 ourselves to be wicked, faithless husband-
 men, such as when the *Lord of the vineyard*
comes, he will utterly destroy; according to
 our Saviour's express declaration, *Luke*
20. 16.

Thus much for the former part of our
 Saviour's application, wherein I have shewn
 that an immense heap of riches is not here
 intended, but that the man of low condi-
 tion may be rich enough to be said *to lay up*
treasure; as also, that the guilt and sin of
 treasuring up lies in doing it for ourselves on-
 ly, to keep it, or spend it upon our lusts.

Let us next enquire what it is to *be rich*
towards God. This is what, in other places
 of Scripture, is expressed under the scheme
 of

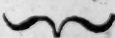
of men's making *friends of the Mammon of* S E R M.
unrighteousness, of laying up treasure in hea- XIV.
ven, where rust and moth do not corrupt, and
where thieves do not break through and steal;
in plainer words, it is to do good, to be rich
in good works, ready to distribute, willing to
communicate, laying up in store for themselves
a good foundation against the time to come, that
they may lay hold on eternal life, 1 Tim. 6.
18, 19.

He that is fully contented and satisfied
with his present state, into which God has
been pleased to put him, whatsoever it be,
and out of that, instead of hoarding up all
for himself, as far as his abilities permit him,
communicates to the necessities of others,
and that freely and chearfully, how poor
soever he be, he is *rich towards God*. For
God loveth a chearful giver, 2 Cor. 9. 7. and
if there be first a willing mind, accepteth ac-
cording to that a man hath, and not accord-
ing to that he hath not, 2 Cor. 8. 12. That
he doth so, appears from the story of the
poor widow in the Gospel, Mark 12. 44.
that cast *two mites into the treasury*, and up-
on a true account is said to have given *more*
than all those rich pretenders, who out of
their abundance, with pompous ostentation,
gave largely to the offerings of God. It al-
so appears from the example of the poor
Churches of Macedonia, whose deep poverty,
in a great trial of affliction, abounded to the
riches

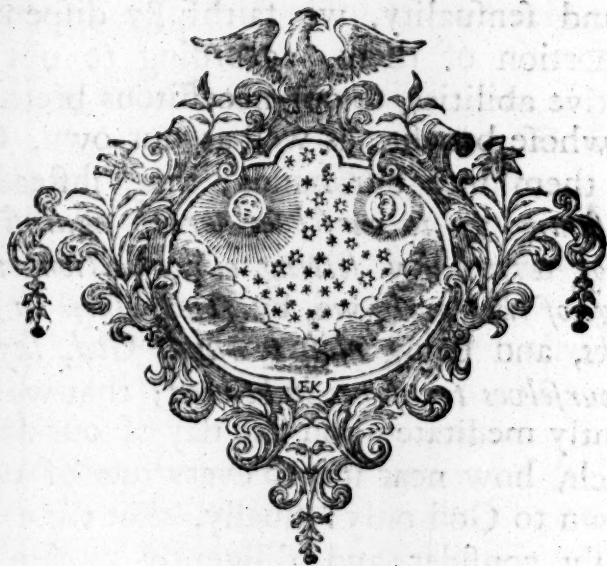
SERM. *riches of their liberality, 2 Cor. 8. 2.* We
 XIV. may observe, that in the next verse they are
 commended for being willing, *of themselves,*
to give even beyond their power. This bene-
 ficence of theirs is by St. Paul, in the first
 verse of that chapter, styled, *the grace of*
God bestowed upon them: Moreover, brethren,
we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed
on the churches of Macedonia: The oppor-
 tunity and will to do good to others, being
 the greatest blessing we can beg of almighty
 God, and the happiest reward of our ser-
 vice, is to be enabled more and more to serve
 him; the best return for our bounty is to
 have our minds enlarged more freely to be-
 stow.

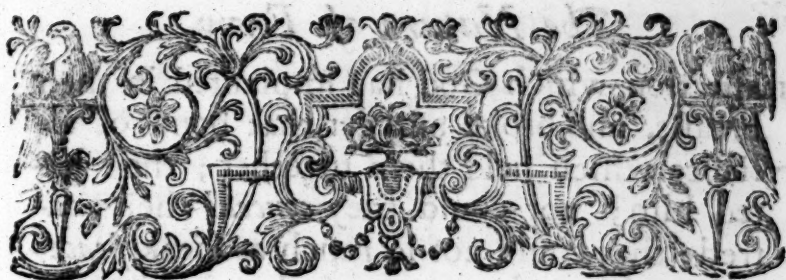
Thus have I, in discoursing upon this por-
 tion of Scripture, considered the Style and
 Title of a *Fool*, given to the rich man, to-
 gether with the Enforcement of this Title
 by a short account both of him, and all his
 wealth, expressed in these words, *This night*
thy soul shall be required of thee, then whose
shall those things be which thou hast provided?
 And lastly, have laid before you the Mean-
 ing of our Saviour's application of the fore-
 going Parable, delivered in these words, *So*
is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and
is not rich towards God.

The Use of the foregoing Discourses is
 this: That being truly convinced how very

a Fool, how extremely miserable this rich S E R M.
man was, we instantly resolve to take heed XIV.
to our ways; that, bearing in our minds the 
fearful example of his sin and punishment,
we may be so happy as not to be partakers
of them; that we *trust not in uncertain*
riches, but in the living God, who giveth us
richly all things to enjoy, 1 Tim. 6. 17. that
we *make not gold our hope, or say to fine gold,*
Thou art our confidence, Job 31. 24. that we
render to God the just tribute of thankful-
ness for his bounty to us; that, instead of
making our temporal good things the in-
struments of riot and intemperance, of luxu-
ry and sensuality, we faithfully dispense a
proportion of them, according to our re-
spective abilities, to our necessitous brethren,
for whose benefit, as well as our own, God
put them into our hands; that, instead of
treasuring up to ourselves wrath against the
day of wrath, by *setting our affections upon*
things of the earth, we, by *fruitfulness in good*
works, and being *rich towards God*, *lay up*
for ourselves treasures in heaven; that we fre-
quently meditate upon the day of our death,
which, how near it is to every one of us, is
known to God only: finally, that we all se-
riously consider and diligently pursue the
things *that belong to our eternal peace*, *before*
they are hid from our eyes; and *so number our*
days, *that we may apply our hearts to wisdom*,
and be prepared for our own departure,
S when-

SERM. whensoever it shall please that almighty Being, to whom alone belong *the issues of life and death*, to require our souls, and summon us to his awful Tribunal, before which all the nations of the world must appear, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, according to the degree or proportion of his work, whether it be good or bad, 2 Cor. 5. 10.





S E R M O N XV.

The malignant Nature of E N V Y.

Preached before the KING, Feb. 15, 1635-6.

GEN. xxxvii. 11.

And his brethren envied him.



AT the beginning of this chapter S E R M. XV.
we read, that *Israel* (or *Jacob*) loved *Joseph* more than all his
sons, because *he was the son of his old age*. So particularly fond was
his love to him, that he distinguished him from the rest of his brethren, by cloathing
him better than *them*. This *partial* behaviour of their father made so strong an impression upon their minds, and provoked them to so high a degree of malice against their brother, that they hated him; they divested themselves of that tenderness and
S 2 affection

S E R M, affection which God had implanted in their
 XV. breasts, and broke asunder that bond of al-
 ~~~~~ liance which held them together; they ha-  
 tred him; nor could they *conceal* their ha-  
 tred; they could not so much as speak *peace-*  
*ably* to him, they never spake to him but  
*churlishly*, and with evident signs of disgust  
 and discontent.

In the mean time the innocent and unde-  
 signing *Joseph* dreamed a dream, and with  
 open, undisguised simplicity, acquainted his  
 brethren with what God had been pleased  
 to reveal to him therein. *Hear, (saith he)*  
*I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed.*  
*Behold, we were binding sheaves, and lo, my*  
*sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and be-*  
*hold your sheaves stood round about it, and*  
*made obeysance to my sheaf.* He likewise  
 told them another dream of his, about the  
*Sun, Moon, and eleven Stars, reverencing*  
*him*; which confirmed the former, by sha-  
 dowing out the same thing under a diffe-  
 rent figure. What effect the account *Jo-*  
*seph* gave them of his dreams wrought upon  
 them, appears from the vehemence and ear-  
 nestness of their question at the 8th verse  
 of this chapter; *What? shalt thou indeed*  
*reign over us? Shalt thou indeed have do-*  
*minion over us? And they hated him so much*  
*the more for his dreams, and for his words.*  
 His father's excessively fond love to him,  
 and delighting to honour *him* in preference  
 to



to them, were great motives of their envy; SERM.  
 but *most of all his dreams*, which they ex- XV.  
 plained as representing his future superiority  
 over them. Every reflexion upon these, cut  
 them to the heart, and filled their minds  
 with dark distrusts and jealous fears; *and*  
*his brethren envied him.*

Now Envy is a grief of mind, arising  
 from the consideration of some Good which  
 our neighbour is possessed of, and we our  
 selves want. It is a miserable passion, that,  
 like a distempered eye, cannot bear the  
 brightness of any *light* whatsoever. He that  
 is under its government and influence, whi-  
 thersoever he turns his eyes, is sure to meet  
 with most *unpleasing* objects: He observes  
 this man vested with authority, and mighti-  
 ly feared; another universally beloved and  
 esteemed; a third rich, and therefore sur-  
 rounded with crowds of admirers; a fourth  
 thought wise and learned, and therefore *his*  
 judgment followed, *his* opinions embraced,  
 and *his* person respected. When any of these  
 things occur to his view, how wretchedly  
 uneasy is he, how excessively disquieted!  
 Sometimes we may hear him complaining of  
 distressed honesty, and slighted worth; of  
 the natural *ill* tendency of affairs, whilst the  
 management of them is in *such and such*  
 hands; but were *he* thought worthy to be  
 advised with, he could recommend a person  
 fit to be entrusted with matters of the great-

SERM. est importance; one of undissembled integrity and unbiassed fidelity; one that has a *clear head* to contrive the most useful and advantagious schemes, and a *steady hand* to pursue them. Sometimes you may see him condescending so far, as to congratulate his neighbour's *superior* happiness; but then he doth it in *such* a manner, with so *cold* an address, with so *stiff* a reservedness, that the malicious envy of his soul may be easily perceived through the *thin* disguise of a *compliment*: His *lips* may be *softer* than butter, yet *hath* he *war* in his heart; his words may be *smoother* than oil, yet are they very drawn *swords*: He will betray you with a *kiss*; he will wound you with a *smile*; he will undermine you with *flattery*, and triumph in your *fall*. This is the man, who will take pains to *expose* to the view of others those blemishes which the principles of *humanity* require him to *conceal*; he will take advantage of mens *little failings* and *imperfections* to sully their *best* and *most laudable* actions. Nay, generally so far is the envious man from giving *every one* honour to *whom* honour is due, so averse from doing *common* justice, that he industriously sets virtue in so *false* a light, that it may be taken for *vice* itself: thus he represents a man of bravery and courage, as one that is rash and inconsiderate; the prudent, as crafty and designing; the generous, as profuse; the frugal, as fordid

did and covetous; the charitable, as vain-SERM.  
glorious, and a *seeker of the praise of men*, XV.  
*more than the praise of God.*

Having given this brief account of the envious man, I shall, in the remainder of this Discourse, lay before you some of the mischievous effects and consequences of the sin of Envy, and offer some Dissuasives from this great evil.

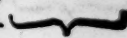
The first effect of this vice that I observe, is, that it makes the life of him that is under the dominion of it, a *continued scene of uneasiness and regret*. As long as he envies, he cannot be otherwise than *miserable*; and probably he *will* envy, as long as he *lives*. Suppose him to be raised to an equal pitch of greatness with him, whom he hath long looked upon with an evil eye: the higher he riseth, the more are his desires enlarged, and other things, that were before out of his sight, now appear to him in all their alluring forms; those things that were before out of the reach of his envy, now become *new* objects of it; he grows as discontented in his *exalted* station, as he was before in his *lower* sphere, and will *continue* to be so, unless he could have an *universal, unlimited* command: He must be set *alone* from the vast heap of *common* men; his authority must be *signal*, and *peculiar*, and not shared by *others*; the *minute*st instance of the contrary



S E R M. gives him an *insupportable uneasiness*. This  
 XV. observation may be sufficiently illustrated by  
 the example of *Haman*, whom, when by  
 the favour of the *Assyrian* Monarch he had  
 arrived to an absolute command over the  
 hundred and twenty seven provinces which  
 composed that mighty empire, we find rendered  
 miserable by the exception of *one single*  
 person; for after a pompous recital of all  
 his glories, he concludes—*All this avail-*  
*eth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai*  
*the Jew sitting at the King's gate, Esth.*  
 5. 13.

What the Prophet hath declared concern-  
 ing the wicked in general, that *they are*  
*like a troubled sea, that cannot rest*, Isa. 57. 20.  
 is strictly applicable to the *envious* man:  
 He is agitated to and fro with the violent  
 force of his unruly passion; he is his own  
 busy tormentor, his own restless persecutor;  
 his envy, like a worm, corrodes him, and  
 like a canker, it frets him: *As he loveth*  
*cursing, so it cometh to him; and as he loveth*  
*not blessing, so is it far from him: As he*  
*cloaths himself with cursing like a raiment,*  
*so it cometh into his bowels like water, and*  
*like oil into his bones*, Psal. 109. 17, 18.

Secondly, It was this vice of *Envy*, so base  
 in it self, so pernicious in its consequences,  
 that brought *death* into the world. *Satan*  
 (who was once a glorious Angel attending  
 the Throne of God, but aiming to exalt  
 himself

himself above it, *like lightning fell from* SERM. *heaven, and was cast down to hell*) *envying* XV.   
the state of happiness wherein our first Parents were placed, betrayed them by his artful suggestions into misery and ruin; deluded by his insinuations, they became rebels to their Creator, and fell from their original purity. And ever since their unhappy fall, the deplorable consequences whereof have fatally extended themselves to all their posterity, it hath been the constant employment of the same evil Spirit, to render mankind as miserable as *himself*.

*Thirdly*, The sin of Envy is destructive of the happiness of Societies. As men are in their frame and nature sociable creatures, they are obliged in their respective stations and offices to promote, to the utmost of their power, the peace and security, the good and prosperity of the Community whereof they are members. But *Envy* is so far from answering the great and beneficial ends for which Society was instituted amongst men, that it tendeth, in its nature, absolutely and entirely to frustrate them. Were things to fall out according to the wishes of the *envious*, every design, however generous it be in its proposal, however unexceptionable in its conduct, however useful and conducive to the general interest it might prove, when carried into execution, would be blasted and come to nothing; that great foundation of  
all

SERM. all commerce and dealing in the world, that

XV. firm band, *unity* and *mutual confidence* among men, would be destroyed; the agreeable interchange of friendly good offices would cease and be no more; and in the room thereof would succeed jealousies and suspicions, misunderstandings, strife and contention, hatred and malice, a continual circulation of injuries on the one hand, and revenges on the other; the strong ties of nature and of blood would be dissolved; the son would rise against the father, and the father against the son, and *a man's foes would be those of his own household*. With how *perverse* a spirit must he be possessed, who cruelly delights in *confusion*, and would with pleasure see the world turned upside down!

So *fruitful* a parent of *mischiefs* is this vice of Envy, that the tumults and disorders which have disturbed the tranquillity of a people, have been very often the dreadful effects of this one cause. How frequently have discontented Politicians become factious Incendiaries! Because the administration of affairs was not entrusted in *their* hands, they have used all the wiles and artifices their envious hearts could suggest to them, to perplex and embarrass them: In order to this, they have pretended a more than ordinary zeal for the publick welfare; have been diligent, active, indefatigable in their



their endeavours to obstruct all the proper measures proposed by others for the common good, put sinister interpretations upon their words and actions, and maliciously aggravated every *little* seeming failure into a real monstrous *crime*. That the sin of Envy hath largely contributed towards fomenting those unhappy divisions and subdivisions, those odious names of distinction, those cursings and revilings of Superiors, which are so flagrant amongst us, and which, if there be not an effectual stop put to them, God only knows what fatal effects in time, in *less time* than may be imagined, they will produce, is a truth too evident to be denied, and too melancholy a one not to be lamented.

*Fourthly*, Envy unqualifies men for the performance of those duties which Religion indispensably requires, and leads them to those practices, which it peremptorily forbids. To think of God with an awful reverence, to acknowledge his wisdom, to adore his goodness, to acquiesce in all the dispensations of his providence; these are things which Religion exacts of us. But Envy gives us *wrong* notions and apprehensions of that *greatest* and *best* of Beings; it prompts us to detract from his attributes, and blaspheme him in our hearts, by representing his ways to be *unequal*, and his dealings with the sons of men *unrighteous*.

Again;

SERM. Again; Religion obliges us to comfort, to  
 XV. serve, to speak well of one another, *to re-  
 ~~~~~*joice with them that rejoice, and to mourn  
 with them that mourn, to promote friend-
 ship and concord in the world. But *Envy*
 inclines men to *add weight* to the afflictions
 of the distressed, to rejoice at the sufferings
 and repine at the prosperity of others, to
 blacken their characters, and rob them of
 their good name; to sow strife amongst bre-
 thren, and to separate chief friends.

It renders them utterly incapable of dis-
 charging the great duty of Charity, the very
 bond of peace and of all virtues, without
 which all our actions are nothing worth,
 and whosoever lives is counted dead before
 God: It stands in direct opposition to the
 very *design* of Christianity, which is a gra-
 cious message of *peace on earth, and good
 will towards men*. St. *John* hath declared,
that love is of God, and that God is love.
 1 Joh. 4. 7, 8. But Envy is the very reverse
 of the spirit of *love*, which is the spirit of
 God. Unwarrantable therefore are the pre-
 tensions of the envious man to the *name of
 a christian*, when he has manifestly divested
 himself of that distinguishing character of
 a disciple of Christ, *the love of his brethren*.
By this (saith he) *shall all men know that ye
 are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*
 Joh. 13. 35.

The sin of Envy is so apt to lead men in-
 to those practices which Religion forbids, S E R M. XV.
 that St. *James* represents it as attended with
every evil work, Jam. 3. 16. To *this* was
 owing the shedding of the blood of righte-
 ous *Abel*: It was *this* that urged the sons
 of *Jacob* to conspire against the life of their
 brother *Joseph*: It was *this* that provoked
Saul to attempt the life of *David*; it was an
 unpardonable *crime* in the latter, to be di-
 stinguished from the former in that Song of
 triumph, 1 Sam. 18. 7. *Saul hath slain his*
thousands, and David his ten thousands; a
 Song, that made *Saul's* heart burn within
 him, and violently transported him into the
 following words, expressive of quick resent-
 ment and racking jealousy, *They have ascri-*
bed unto David ten thousands, and to me
they have ascribed but thousands: and what
can he have more, but the kingdom?

What but the workings of *this devilish*
 vice robbed *Naboth* of his life? Had his
 Vineyard been *unenvied*, his *innocence* had
 been *unquestioned*, and his person *safe*; but
 when an inordinate thirst after the property
 of *Naboth* had possessed the mind of *Ahab*,
 no regard was to be had to justice or pity,
 but he must be loaded with the falsest ac-
 cusations, and in consequence thereof per-
 secuted to death; and fatally verify the re-
 flexion of the Wise Man, Prov. 27. 4. *Wrath*
is

SERM. *is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who*
 XV. *is able to stand before Envy?*

The last effect of this vice that I shall observe is, that it provokes God's wrath against us.

As God is infinite in knowledge, and distinctly perceives every envious intention, every malicious regret arising in the heart of man, and strictly watches it in its progress, so is he of purer eyes than to behold it without the utmost *Disapprobation*. How can the *Divine Majesty* be otherwise than highly *displeased* with that sin, which hath all the vices and all the confusion in the world for its issue, and opposes itself to his almighty Providence, which orders all things, both in heaven and earth, as seems best to his unerring wisdom? He who in so dreadful a manner poured forth his vengeance upon those Spirits, which *envied* the most High, by dispossessing them of *their first estate*, and reserving them in *everlasting chains, under darkness, to the judgment of the great day*, doth certainly detest and abhor, and will infallibly punish the same sin in *men*, who are made *lower* than the Angels. Wherefore the Apostle, in the first chapter of his Epistle to the *Romans*, ver. 28, 29, 32. ranks those who are full of *envy* amongst *them* against whom God shews his heavy displeasure, by giving them over to a *reprobate*

The Nature of Envy.

271

bate mind, to do those things which are not SERM.
convenient, and which they who commit are XV.
worthy of death. And in his Epistle to the

Galatians, 5. 20, 21. the sin of Envy is to
be found in that black catalogue of vices,
whereof he tells us, that they who do such
things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
And we cannot but know, that if the en-
vious person will be incapable of inheriting
the kingdom of God, he can inherit nothing
else, but everlasting misery.

Having thus laid before you some of the
mischievous effects and consequences of the
sin of envy, I now proceed to offer some dis-
suasives from this great evil.

And first; whosoever he is, that envies
his neighbour, let him consider seriously,
and weigh in his mind the exceeding great
absurdity of the sin of envy. If a just and
impartial view were taken of it, it would
appear to be the most *unreasonable* vice in
the world. In the indulging *some* sins,
there may be a present *satisfaction* proposed;
in the commission of *others*, there may be a
prospect of *gain* and *advantage*; but *envy* is
so far from *profiting* a man, so far from af-
fecting the mind with any *transient* joy, with
any the *least* degree of *complacency*, that its
very nature consists in disquieting a man's
self. Envy is his *sin* and his *punishment* too;
and what is still a greater aggravation of his
punishment, and a manifest token of the
absurdity

SERM. *absurdity* of that sin, he disquiets himself

XV. in *vain*: for he can no more mend his own
 ~~~~~ *bad* condition, by *envying* the *good* one of  
 his neighbour, than he can by the utmost  
 stretch of thought *add one cubit to his own*  
*stature*. To this it may be added, that the  
 envious man, whilst he is busied with the  
*fruitless* contemplation of what *another* en-  
 joys, of course overlooks and neglects what  
 is within the *reach of his own enjoyment*. On  
 the one hand, the grief he conceives at his  
 neighbour's prosperity, interrupts the satis-  
 faction he might otherwise receive from what  
 is in *his own power*; as on the other, to be  
 pleased and delighted with *another's happiness*,  
 would in a considerable degree enlarge *his*  
*own*.

*Secondly*, let him consider the *nature and*  
*quality* of those things, for which he en-  
 vieth his neighbour.

Doth he envy him for his superior beauty?  
 Let him be satisfied, that on *this account* he  
 is not *worth* looking upon with an invidious  
 eye; that, according to the wise man's re-  
 mark, *favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain*,  
 Prov. 31. 31. subject to a *thousand* accidents,  
*one* of which is sufficient to deface, or cast a  
 blemish upon the agreeable image; that  
 beauty is not proof against *disease*; that  
*death* will not relent at, and pity the untime-  
 ly ruin of so fair a fabrick. Let him re-  
 member, that they have *both one Father*,  
 and



and *one God* created them, that *he* is no less noble an instance, than the *other*, of the mighty operation of *his* hands, that he hath the same *divine* image impressed upon him, a soul equally immortal, and a body equally capable of being made a temple of the Holy Ghost. S E R M. XV.

Doth he envy his neighbour's great plenty and affluence of *this world's* goods? Let him consider what our Saviour hath observed, *Luke* 12. 15. and daily experience confirms, *that a man's life, the happiness and comfort of life, consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.* Let him consider the uncertainty of riches; how *they often make to themselves wings, and fly away,* *Prov.* 23. 5. and leave the deluded worldling behind them: Let him recollect with himself the *changes* of condition in the world; how some have heaped up wealth, and for a while flourished, according to the Psalmist's expression, *Psal.* 37. 36. *like a green bay-tree,* and how they have been afterwards reduced to a *mean estate*, and rendered the objects of *contempt*, as they were once of *envy*.

Doth he envy his neighbour the boasted happiness of the promiscuous admiration and applause of the *multitude*? Let him consider, that what the *other* values himself upon, is but the empty creature of *pride and vanity*, and the imaginary off-spring of *popular breath*; but poor and low, as it really

T

is

SERM. is in itself, the purchase of it was very *dear*;

XV. for before he could attain to it, he debased and sunk himself to the most disingenuous instances of flattery, and was forced to bear with the most troublesome impertinences. And in order to have it *continued* to him, he must be still contented with the loss of his liberty, and still accommodate himself in the most servile manner to the pleasures and passions of others. A man, thus meanly stooping to gain and retain the *seeming adoration* of those that are about him, every considerate person would judge fitter to be pitied for his *weakness*, than envied for his *popularity*.

They who are advanced to eminent degrees of *power and authority* in the world, are not so *completely happy*, as the generality of mankind take them to be, who are too apt to see objects in a *false* light, to be captivated by the *glittering appearances* of things, without considering the dangers men in high stations are exposed to, the difficulties they have to encounter in them, the fatigues, and sollicitudes, and troubles, and vexations that are ever inseparable from them.

To close this point; there is nothing this world affords *worth envying*, because there is nothing in it, how desirable soever it may appear to the eyes of men, that is not attended with uneasiness and disquietude. We  
may

may safely take the judgment of Solomon in SERM.  
 this case, who had accurately surveyed the XV.  
 qualities and freely indulged himself in the  
 enjoyment of earthly goods. *Whatsoever,*  
*saith he, Eccles. 2. 10, 11. mine eyes desired,*  
*I kept not from them; I with-held not my*  
*heart from any joy: for my heart rejoiced in*  
*all my labour, and this was the portion of*  
*all my labour. Then I looked on all the works*  
*that my hands had wrought, and on the labour*  
*that I had laboured to do, and behold, all was*  
*vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was*  
*no profit under the sun.*

*Thirdly,* In order to dissuade men from  
 the sin of envy, it will be of use to con-  
 sider the excellency of *internal spiritual goods,*  
 in preference to *external temporal ones.*

It is notoriously apparent, that beauty,  
 and wealth, and honour frequently capti-  
 vate the affections, and betray men to luxury  
 and pride, to violence and falshood, to wan-  
 tonness and sloth. But on the other side,  
 virtue and grace, those fair endowments of  
 the *mind,* have such a *rooted* beauty, as is  
 not to be *tainted* by any stain or blemish;  
 they cannot be bent by any sordid motives to  
*vile* and *disingenuous* purposes, being in their  
 frame and constitution *intrinsically just.*

When *temporal* goods have raised a man's  
 hopes and expectations of great success and  
 happiness in the world, some new, un-  
 thought-of accident may and often doth in-



SERM. terpose to disappoint them. Either he may  
 XV. by collusive arts, or by the hand of violence  
 be deprived of them; or he may be confined  
 to the bed of sickness, and his life may hang  
 in doubt before him day and night, and  
 then they will be far from yielding *any*  
*comfort* to him, and he rendered incapable  
 of receiving any *satisfaction from them*. But  
 in the mean while, innocence and virtue are  
 an *eternal* treasure; are so our *own*, that no  
 event, no fraud, no force can dispossess us  
 of them: And when diseases scatter pains  
 and torments into the joints and bowels,  
 these will supply perpetual reliefs, and take  
 off the edge of the sharpest afflictions; these  
 will be a never-failing source of complacen-  
 cy and delight, of peace and joy; of that  
 peace which the *world* cannot give, and of  
 that joy, which no *man can* take from us.

To this reflexion it may be added, that  
 it is no small evidence in behalf of *moral*  
*and spiritual* good, that, notwithstanding  
 the prejudices of mankind, *they* only per-  
 sonally denominate with their character the  
 possessors of them. As *corrupt* as the world  
 is, neither power, nor wealth, nor honour,  
 how fondly soever embraced by some, how  
 constantly soever envied by others, but *in-*  
*nocence and virtue* alone confer the title of a  
*good man*.

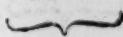
*Fourthly*, it will be expedient to impress  
 deeply upon our minds just notions and ap-  
 prehensions

prehenſions of *divine providence* — to con-SERM.  
ſider, that he who created all things, ſtill XV.  
watchfully ſuperintends his creatures, ſtill  
provides for them, ſtill rejoices over them  
to do them good — that *he* conſtituted the  
various ranks of men in a wonderful ſubor-  
dination to each other; — to conſider with-  
al, that he hath given the *leaſt* of us *more*  
than we can pretend to. If we could make out  
an *inherent* or *acquired* right to a greater ac-  
ceſſion of this world's goods, *then* to be diſ-  
contented would be *leſs* unjuſtifiable. But,  
O man, as the Apoſtle expoſtulates, Rom. 9.  
20, 21. who art thou, that *pleadeſt* againſt  
God? *ſhall the thing formed ſay to him that*  
*formed it, why haſt thou made me thus?*  
*Hath not the potter power of the clay to make*  
*of the ſame lump one veſſel to honour, and*  
*another to diſhonour?* Shall we then pre-  
ſume to *preſcribe to God?* Are we not in *his*  
hand? *cannot he* do what he pleaſes with  
us? *ſhall he* not do what he *will* with his  
*own?* is *our eye evil*, becauſe *he is good?*  
Let us remember, that we are *well* dealt  
with; that our *ſins* deſerve *greater* diſap-  
pointments, *greater* afflictions than any we  
have hitherto met with, and cry out with  
the reſigned Eli, *It is the Lord, let him do*  
*what ſeemeth to him good,* 1 Sam. 3. 18.

Theſe and ſuch like thoughts of provi-  
dence, if they have a due influence upon the  
heart of man, will diſarm his envy, will

S E R M. silence his unreasonable murmurs, and make  
 XV. him ashamed to repine; so that neither the  
 ~~~~~ splendor of any thing that is *great in others*,  
 nor the conceit of any thing that is *good in
 himself*, will be able with all its enchant-
 ments to withdraw his eyes from looking
 upon *himself* to be *sinful dust* and ashes;
 but he will with an humble acquiescence
 submit his choices and desires to the will of
 the great Disposer of all things, being satis-
 fied, that God knows what is *best* for him.
 He will then not *fret* himself at *others*,
 whose way *prosper*s; what he hath of the
 things of *this* life he will use with *thankful-
 ness*, and all the rest he will want *with con-
 tentment*.

Fifthly, It will be useful to consider, that
 notwithstanding all the visible *inequalities* of
 conditions here, there *will* come a time,
 when they shall *all* be *reconciled*, when they
 that envy, and they that are envied shall be
 upon a *level*: When the stage of life is once
 shut up, we shall *all* be *alike*, though the
 parts we acted upon it here, were widely
different from each other: We shall all re-
 turn to the *same common earth* out of which
 we were formed, and till the dreadful sound
 of the trumpet awake us, shall lie in that
 mansion of death the grave, without diffe-
 rence and without distinction. There *the
 wicked cease from troubling*, and there *the
 weary be at rest*: there *the prisoners rest to-
 gether*;

gether; they hear not the voice of the oppressor: S E R M.
the small and great are there, and the servant XV.
is free from his master, Job 3. 17, 18, 19. 

Lastly, Reflect upon the different conditions of good and bad men in the other world. In the next life, the meanest slave will be far superior to his master, if he hath more faithfully obeyed the will of God here. Son, said Abraham to the rich man, who, whilst alive was cloathed in purple, and fared delicately every day, but after his removal into another state, wanted water to cool his tongue, and abate the raging flame of hell-fire, Son, remember, that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus evil things: now is he comforted and thou tormented, Luke 16. 25. Yet farther; their case will be more dreadful, whose power hath enabled them to do much good, but their worldly-mindedness, or their pride, or their lust hath with-held them from it. For it is a fixed, unalterable rule, that unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required, Luke 12. 48. and mighty men, who have misapplied and abused the favours of heaven, shall be mightily tormented, Wisd. 6. 6. The consideration of that final determination of mankind to an irreversibile state of happiness or misery, according to what they have done in this life, whether it be good or bad, if it be attended to with that seriousness of mind

SERM. which the importance of it *demands*, will
XV. have a mighty influence in disposing men
not to *envy* those who are above them, with
respect to *any* of the *outward* advantages of
this world, but to *imitate* those, who excel
in *virtue*, and grow in *grace*, and daily *im-*
prove the spiritual talents committed to their
management, that so they may pass through
things *temporal*, as finally not to lose the
things *eternal*.

To conclude: Let us constantly offer up
our petitions to the throne of grace, and
earnestly beseech the divine Author of uni-
versal benevolence among men to put into
our minds good desires; to endue us with
extensive charity, that we may rejoice with
them that rejoice, and mourn with them
that mourn, and love our neighbours as *our-*
selves; to give us such a *contented* spirit,
that we may resign ourselves to the guidance
of his providence, and rely upon him with
an implicit affiance; and *lastly*, to *deliver us*
from envy, and its inseparable attendants,
hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness.





S E R M O N XVI.

The Certainty of Death.

P S A L. lxxxix. 48.

What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?



I N the present Subject of Dis-SERM. course every individual person, XVI. without limitation or exception, is strictly and properly concerned. • *What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul, his life, from the hand of the grave?* that is, every man shall die, as surely as he is now alive; no man can secure, or defend himself from the power of the grave.

Although you know *this*, and be established in this great, important truth, yet is it
it

S E R M. it meet to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance of it, to awaken your attention, to persuade you to consider your latter end, and to lay before you what influence the certainty of your Deaths ought to have upon the conduct of your lives.

If we take a survey of this Life of ours, we shall find it exposed to as many dangers, as there are either things or accidents in the world. We see ourselves, not only by our Nature and Constitution subject to varieties of Diseases, but every thing *without* us, nay those very things, without which we can by no means subsist, are frequent occasions of our dissolution: the Air we breathe, and which we so necessarily use for the maintenance of the vital flame, blasted with an unwholesome vapour, infects with plagues and pestilential diseases: Fire and Water, those most useful instruments of *life*, how often do they betray to *death*! the Food men eat, how usually doth it become their surfeit, or their poison! Besides the events of these, I might add the numerous distempers arising from different causes, from Heat and Cold, from Rest and Labour, from Sleep and Watching: It were endless to recite the many roads and passages to Death, which are all wide and open, and passed through in an instant.

Surely

Surely therefore it will become us to ex-
ercise our minds in the contemplation of a
matter, in which we are all so nearly con-
cerned, and seriously lay it to heart. —

But (I know not how it comes to pass, but
so it is) there is a certain secret pride, a
root of vanity and self-love in our breasts,
persuading us that we are some *great* thing
for all this, nor suffering us to dwell upon
that melancholy theme of death. — But
*whether men will bear, or whether they will
forbear*, it hath pleased almighty God so to
order the matter, that the whole creation
proclaims to us this great truth. If we
look up to the heavens, we shall see the Sun
which issued from the womb of the morn-
ing, setting within a few hours; and this
comfortable light, which now encircles us,
will be buried anon in the grave of dark-
ness. Look we on Earth, the grass and
herbs before us; how soon do they dry up
and wither! nay, how seldom do they stay
out *that* time, but either some hand crops,
or mows them down, some beast devours,
or some foot tramples upon them! The gar-
ments we wear upon our bodies are lively
emblems of our mortality, and daily put us
in mind of our grave-cloaths; and when we
go into our beds, we cannot but remember,
that we must one day go down into the
grave. What is our *sleep*, but a warmer
kind

SERM.
XVI.
~~~~~

S E R M. kind of death; and wherein doth one asleep  
 XVI. differ from one *deceased*, but that the next  
 morning is his *nearer* resurrection? Yet  
 this representation of our death we have be-  
 fore us in our own persons every night. The  
 time would fail me, if I should run over  
 the several remembrances that bear us com-  
 pany in all our ways, and follow us whither-  
 soever we turn ourselves. Shall I instance  
 in the daily labours and employments of  
 many of you? When you throw your grain  
 into the ground, can you forbear consider-  
 ing, that the time will come when *you* shall  
 be buried in the earth, as *that* is? When  
 you reap or mow, can you *chuse* to think,  
 that one time or other *death* will not do the  
*same* thing by you? When you see any of  
 your *cattle* dead, can you *chuse* to think,  
 that they are not a whit *more mortal* than  
 yourselves? Or let me transfer your thoughts  
 to your fellow-creatures, *men*: When you  
 see, or hear of any of them being seized by  
 death, can you be so destitute of under-  
 standing, so void of sense, as not to appre-  
 hend yourselves concerned? For were you  
 in a besieged town, or in the field before an  
 enemy, and one of you should see the *next*  
 man to him shot dead before him, would  
 he not be startled at the accident, as confi-  
 dering, that the same instrument of death  
 might have done the same execution upon  
 him-



*himself?* Suppose, out of this Congrega-  
 tion here assembled together, one or two of  
 us were to be picked out to be condemned  
 to certain death, the execution of which  
*could* not be delayed above some few *months*,  
*might* also be within two or three *days*: Sup-  
 pose further, this choice were to be made  
 without any respect had to quality, to age,  
 or youth, or sex, so that none could possi-  
 bly guess, *who* should be the parties to be  
 taken hold on, but every one might as just-  
 ly imagine himself *one*, as any *other*. Were  
 we now in this condition, what apprehen-  
 sions, think you, should we have, what sad  
 fears would beset us, what cold suspicions,  
 that each of us were the unfortunate person  
 on whom the fatal lot would fall? To speak  
 the truth plainly; *we* are here now in *this*  
 condition, however it comes to pass that we  
 think not of it; for we all stand in the pre-  
 sence of almighty God, with whom there  
 is no *respect* of persons, in whose hands is  
 the breath of all things living, to dispose of  
 it according to no other rule, than *that* of  
 his uncontrollable power and infinite wis-  
 dom.

Seeing then *that* life, which we so high-  
 ly prize, and so dearly love, is surrounded  
 with such dangers and uncertainties, what  
 other course shall we take, but that of ma-  
 naging and employing the remainder of it

to

SERM.  
XVI.

SERM. to the best advantage, and taking occasion,  
 XVI. even from the *shortness* of it, to make it last  
 to eternity, and endure infinitely *beyond* the  
 ages of our first fathers, whose days were  
 measured by seven or eight hundred years,  
 even to *that* age, to which *a thousand years*  
*are but as one single day?*

The business therefore of the remaining  
 part of this Discourse, shall be to lay be-  
 fore you what influence the consideration  
 of the Certainty of our Death ought to  
 have upon the Conduct of our Lives; and  
 that is

*First*, To lessen the value we are too apt  
 to put upon ourselves, and moderate our af-  
 fections for the things of this world.

*Secondly*, To quicken and stir us up in  
 our preparations for the *next*.

To pride themselves in Youth, in Health,  
 in Strength, in Beauty, in superiority of Si-  
 tuation above others, *this* is the *way* of men,  
 and *this* is their *foolishness*. For will their  
*health* support itself beneath the pressure of  
 the Gout, or Stone? Will their *strength*  
 withstand the shock of a long Ague, or bear  
 the siege of a Consumption? Is *youth* a pre-  
 servative against the rage of a burning fe-  
 ver? Is *beauty* proof against disease? Will  
 the worms forbear thy *comeliness*? Will  
 death

death allow fairer quarter to the mighty Mo-  
 narch than to the meanest Subject, to the  
 Noble than to the Ignoble? Will the pomps  
 and glories of this world prolong the date  
 of life *one single moment*? If none of all  
 this be (and that it is not, we all know, and  
 well would it be with us if we did duly  
 and to purpose consider it) if death at its  
 approach levels the Scepter with the Plough,  
 and leaves no difference in the exactest *beau-*  
*ties* to distinguish them from the *roughest*,  
 most *unpolished* features, if it overshadows  
*all*, high and low, strong and weak, young  
 and old, in one uniform darkness, *here* sure-  
 ly is matter sufficient to humble the pride,  
 and mortify the vanity of man, and to  
 make him say *to corruption, Thou art my fa-*  
*ther, and to the worm, Thou art my mother*  
*and my sister, Job 17. 14.*

Again; to mind *earthly* things, to live in  
 pleasure and wantonness, and *make provision*  
*for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof*, to pro-  
 ject schemes and designs for many years to  
 come, to *trust in their wealth, and boast them-*  
*selves in the multitude of their riches, Psal.*  
*49. 6.* these are frequent, but fatal delusions  
 of the sons of men. For have they looked  
 into the book of fate, and *there* discovered  
 whole *ages* allotted to them? Will their  
 great designs and laborious contrivances se-  
 cure to them the privilege of a long life?  
 Will



SERM. Will their wealth bribe even Death to *pass*  
 XVI. *them* by, and let them go free? Hear what

~~~~~ God said to the rich man, *Luke 12.* who, when his ground brought forth plentifully, *thought within himself, saying, What shall I do? because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do, I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits, and my goods; And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. How fondly did this mistaken man flatter himself in his own eyes, and please his heart with the prospect of many years of life, and as many of pleasure and sensual enjoyments! But an unlooked-for, unthought-of accident broke in and spoiled his whole design; for God said to him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.*

In that sad hour, when it shall please God to require their souls, how *small* will be the content and satisfaction of the voluptuous from the consideration of those delights in which they have spent their Days, but must now leave them for ever! How will they then be vexed with horrible fear, and changing their minds, and groaning for anguish of spirit, say within themselves, *We have erred from the way of truth, we have wearied ourselves in the way of wickedness*
and

and destruction, and we have gone through SERM.
dangerous ways, and we have not known the XVI.
way of the Lord. What hath pride profited
us? and what good hath riches, with our
vaunting, brought us? Wisd. 5. 7, 8.

Therefore, *Secondly*, The consideration of the certainty of our deaths ought to quicken and stir us up in our preparation for the next world.

It is, I fear, an equally certain and melancholy truth, that many, when they lie upon the bed of sickness, and the Physician hath left them, and there remains no hope of life, *then*, in all haste, but not *'till then*, send for God's Minister to fit them for heaven: *Then*, when they are leaving the world, and all that is in it, they seem to turn devout on the sudden, and set up for a strict course of piety, as if Heaven were an Hospital designed for decayed, worn-out Sinners, and might be had at any time for asking for: Now their wealth and riches yield them no content, they would by all means, and with all speed, be shewn the way to Paradise, to the blessed mansions of the new *Jerusalem*; now their appetite is lost, or their digestion fails them, they earnestly desire to be brought to *the Supper of the Lamb*, the eternal feast with Saints and Angels.

SERM. There is none so proud and desperate a
 XVI. sinner, but would fain *die the death of the*
 { righteous, and have his latter end like his.

When the King of terrors approaches him, when, to the sick faintings of a weakened body, are added on one hand the passionate desire of *life*, and on the other the violent abhorrences of *death*, and above all, the conscious horror of a life divided between vanity and guilt, the dread of an impartial judgment at the awful tribunal of Christ, when every dissuative from vice, every motive to virtue, every opportunity of doing good, and the obligations to it, which he slighted and rejected, shall stand as Witnesses against him, then doth he begin to confess the madness of his former ways, and the desperate follies of his past life, and if a short *reprieve* were granted him, vows a strict and severe reformation.

But since all men know, that this great change *will* one day come; since none can tell how *soon* it will come, why do they not *provide* against it? why do they not put themselves in a fit posture, not to *avoid* the stroke of approaching death, for *that* is out of their power, but to alleviate its pressure, that it may be the less unwelcome?

I shall illustrate this by a familiar instance or two. If you ask some men, why they take such pains to lay up money, their answer

swer is, that they do it against the time of SERM. sickness, or old age. What is the meaning, XVI. that they who are so provident against age or sickness, cannot look a little further and provide for the time of death, which is the next thing to age and sickness, and often, very often comes *before* them?

Again; were you in an house decayed, and every day in danger of having it fall upon your heads, you would surely look out for some *other* habitation for yourselves and families; or were your dwelling never so convenient, firm and good, yet if you have no term in it, but may be turned out at a *minute's* warning, you certainly would have an eye upon some *other*. That this house of our body is decayed and ruinous, and besides this, that we have no *certain time* in it, you will readily grant; how is it then, that you look not out for *other* habitations against the time you may be compelled to leave *these*; that since your being is so *uncertain*, at least you remove not *some* of your goods, and secure a *part* of them, whatever may happen to the *rest*; lest when upon the sudden you shall be forced thence, you be fain to go away destitute, or while you stay to remove your goods, your tottering dwelling fall upon your heads, and bury you together with them in one ruin?

SERM. Our blessed Saviour, at the 18th chapter
 XVI. of St. *Luke's* Gospel, that he might awaken
 mens serious attention to this truth, draws
 an argument from a very unusual subject,
 and sets us a wicked, unjust steward for a
 pattern; that since the time will come, that
we shall be called to an account of *our* stew-
 ards-hip by *our* Lord, as the person in that
 parable was by *his*, we take some effectual
 course, that others may receive us into their
 houses: And we may be sure, that since
his lord commended politick injustice in *him*,
ours will much more approve of wise and pru-
 dent piety in *us*. Therefore, as our Saviour
 applies that parable, *make to yourselves friends*
of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that when
ye fail, when ye die, you may be received
into everlasting habitations. The dwellings
 we now have are but *tents* and *tabernacles* at
 best, pitched for a night or two, and then
 to be removed, and therefore are so stiled
 in Scripture. But *this* we know, that, if
 we are not wanting to ourselves, if we give
 all diligence to make our calling and elec-
 tion sure, by repenting truly of our sins, and
 doing the will of our heavenly Father all
 the days of this frail, mortal life, when the
 earthly house of this our tabernacle is dis-
 solved, we shall be put in possession of a
 building of God, *an house not made with*
hands, eternal in the heavens, 2 Cor. 5. 1.
 therefore

therefore in *this*, that is, in this ruinous, SERM.
 earthly tabernacle, we groan earnestly, de- XVI.
 siring to be cloathed upon with our house
 which is from heaven; for we that are in
 this tabernacle do groan being burdened,
 not for that we would be uncloathed, but
 cloathed upon, that mortality might be
 swallowed up of life.

To conclude; let us ever bear in our
 minds this great, important truth, that we
 must certainly one day, how soon we know
 not, go down into the grave, the center to
 which all men are tending: Let us also re-
 member, that *as it is appointed unto men once*
to die, so after this will be the judgment, Heb.
 9. 27. *When the son of man shall come in the*
glory of his Father, with his angels, and shall
reward every man according to his works,
 Matt. 16. 27. Let us have always before
 our eyes the coming of the Lord, and not
 delay our preparation for that most strict ac-
 count of the actions of our lives which must
 be rendred to *him*, that we may give it up
 with joy, and not with grief; that so we
 having denied ungodliness and worldly lusts,
 and lived soberly, righteously and godly in
 this present world, our minds may be for-
 tified against the fear of death, that when
 our departure is at hand, we may chearfully
 commend our spirits to God, and finally,
together with all those that have departed this

SER M. *life in the true faith of Christ, we may have*
XVI. *our perfect consummation and bliss both in*
body and soul in everlasting glory, through Je-
sus Christ our Lord, to whom with the Fa-
ther and Holy Ghost, be ascribed all honour
and praise, now and for ever. Amen.



E JY61

SERMON



S E R M O N XVII.

The Uncertainty of the Time of
Death.

Preached before the KING, Feb. 28, 1728-9.

P R O V. xxvii. 1.

*Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou
knowest not what a day may bring forth.*



IT is a common vanity amongst S E R M.
men to flatter themselves with XVII.
the prospect of an *uninterrupted* ~
enjoyment of the things of this
world. To correct this foolish
imagination, the wise man offers to every
individual person an excellent affectionate
caution, grounded upon a strong, unanswer-
able reason. *Boast not thyself of to-morrow;*

U 4

for

SERM. for thou knowest not what a day may bring
 XVII. forth: that is, be not so confident of thy
 present power, riches, or any thing else, as
 to grow presumptuous, and brag what thou
 wilt do, or enjoy hereafter; for thou canst
 not be secure of this very day (wherein thou
 makest to thyself such large promises of
 the future) which may produce something,
 for any thing thou knowest, that shall
 spoil all thy designs, and frustrate all thy
 expectations, which thou hast for to-mor-
 row*.

We have not, we cannot have any war-
 rantable assurance, that to-morrow shall be as
 this day, *Is.* 56. 12. We know not how
 soon those goods, which we set our hearts
 and affections upon, will be removed from
 us, or we from them. Upon this double con-
 tingency we may usefully employ our medi-
 tations, and from thence easily discover the
 folly of presuming to boast ourselves of to-
 morrow.

They, whose unguarded minds are cor-
 rupted by a state of affluence and prosperity,
 are too much inclined to boast themselves in
 the multitude of their riches, *Psal.* 49. 6.
Their wealth is their strong city, and as an
high wall in their own conceit, *Prov.* 18. 11,
 secure and impregnable. But the wise

* Bishop Patrick's Paraph.

man, in reference hereto, very reasonably S.E.R.M. asks this question, Prov. 23. 5. *Wilt thou XVII. set thine eyes, or wilt thou cause thine eyes to fly, upon that which is not, hath no substantial existence? For riches certainly make themselves wings, they flee away as an eagle towards heaven, swiftly and irrecoverably, without leaving the least trace behind them; they are subject to varieties of casualties, liable to be dissipated by carelessness and sloth, or consumed by luxury and prodigality, of which their unthinking owners make them the instruments, or to become a prey to the fraud and deceit, or the violence and oppression of others: So that it has been no uncommon thing for such proud boasters, who have said in their hearts, we are rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, in conclusion to find themselves wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, Rev. 3. 17. and to be compelled thereby seriously to lament the change of their condition in the words of the author of the Book of Wisdom, 5. 8, 9. What hath pride profited us? and what good hath riches with our vaunting brought us? all those things are passed away like a shadow.*

The vainglorious man fondly entertains himself with the pleasing thought of his being the object of popular esteem and applause,

SERM. pause, and surrounded with *crowds* of ad-
 XVII. *mirers*——not considering that the materials
 ~~~~~ which compose his satisfactions, are all made  
 up of the most *precarious* things imaginable,  
 depending only upon the *uncertain* wills,  
 and *fickle* humours and passions of others,  
 who are often observed, without any reason  
 or foundation, to *alter* their fantastick opi-  
 nions, and to *trample* upon *that very* image,  
 which *before* they had *set up*, and *bowed*  
*down* to.

The case is frequently parallel with re-  
 gard to the idol of *ambitious* men, temporal  
 grandeur and power. When their successes  
 have been answerable to their endeavours,  
 when they have said, we shall *never* be  
*cast down*, there shall *no harm* happen to  
 us, on a sudden some cross, unforeseen ac-  
 cident hath fatally *changed* the scene, and  
 they have been rendred more *miserable* by  
 their *fall*, than the glory of their *height*  
 could make them *happy*. I myself, saith  
 the Psalmist, *Psal. 37. 36, 37. have seen the*  
*ungodly in great power, and flourishing like*  
*a green bay-tree. I went by, and lo, he*  
*was gone; I sought him, but his place could*  
*no where be found.*

The votaries of the *wisdom* of *this world*,  
 the masters of refined *policy* trust in their  
 own understandings, and project plausible  
 designs, and speak magnificently of them,  
 and

and glory in them, as if the final issues of SERM. things were altogether in their own disposal: But the event doth not always answer their sanguine expectations; they often find their curious devices confounded, and their most elaborate contrivances defeated by secret contingencies, which wait upon the course of human affairs, and which it is not in the power of the deepest penetration to discover, nor the most consummate skill to provide against, or divert. The disappointment of their purposes is elegantly represented by the Prophet *Isaiab*, under the scheme of a spider's web, *Isai. 59. 6. their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works.* XVII.

As nothing can be more unreasonable in itself, than that they who cannot give a just account of present things, should be forecasting for future; that they who cannot tell what a day may bring forth, should be caring for the morrow, nay, for events of distant years; that they who cannot make one hair white or black, should take upon them to dispose of the fate of nations, and revolutions of states; so is there nothing more insolent than such behaviour in respect of God, the supreme Orderer of the concerns of the children of men, nothing more



SERM. more likely to provoke him to withdraw  
 XVII. his protection from them. For why should  
 he take care of *them*, who esteem themselves wise enough to provide for and secure *themselves*; nay, who *oppose* their counsels to *his*, and think, in despite of his power and providence, to compass their ends? A wall that is daubed with *untempered* mortar will tumble of itself: but when the *Almighty* shall rend it with a *stormy* wind in his fury, and an *overflowing* shower in his anger, Ezek. 13. 13. will it then stand? As it is the triumph of the *divine* power to humble the *lofty* looks of man, and bow down his *haughtiness*, Is. 2. 11. So is it the prerogative of the *divine* wisdom to disappoint the devices of the *crafty*, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprize, to take the wise in their own *craftiness*, and carry headlong the counsel of the *froward*, Job 5. 12, 13. The foolishness of God, saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 1. 25. is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men: And if so, surely his wisdom and strength will overthrow their folly and weakness, the impotent designs of *worldly* wisdom; that *Dagon* must fall before the *Ark* of God, 1 Sam. 5. 3. I am the Lord, as he declareth by the Prophet *Isaiab*, chap. 44. verse 24. that maketh all things, that stretcheth

eth forth the heavens alone, and spreadeth abroad the earth by myself, that frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad, that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish. SERM. XVII.

From this brief view of the *instability* of human things, we may collect the folly of presuming to boast ourselves of to-morrow: The same truth may with equal evidence be deduced from another topick, the shortness and uncertainty of human life.

This life of ours, which we are apt to set so great a value upon, for which such pains is taken for the *present*, and such provision made for the *future*, is so poor, so worthless, so *unstable* a thing, that the Scriptures represent its condition under the images of the *slightest*, and most *fading* and *transient* objects of our senses. Accordingly we read in the book of *Job*, chap. 14. verse 1. *Man that is born of a woman is of few days; he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down:* In the Prophet *Isaiab's* allusion, *all flesh is grass, and the goodlinefs thereof as the flower of the field*, chap. 40. 6. And the Psalmist saith, *Psal. 39. 6. Behold, thou hast made my days as it were a span long.* A span indeed, how *short* soever it seems, is a *certain* determinate measure, framed of a just number

SERM. number of *minute* parts; and *flowers* are  
 XVII. a whole Spring in growing, and being  
 { cut down, have *life* remaining in the *root*,  
 that will *return* them in the *succeeding*  
 year in all their glory. As if therefore  
 these things were of too *permanent* a be-  
 ing to represent the life of man by, the  
*Psalmist* adds, *Verily, every man living, at*  
*his best state, is altogether vanity;* and to  
 that passage in the book of *Job* it is sub-  
 joined, *He fleeth also as a shadow, and con-*  
*tinueth not.*

Go to now (saith St. James, 4. 13, 14.)  
*ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go*  
*into such a city, and continue there a year,*  
*and buy, and sell, and get gain; whereas ye*  
*know not what shall be on the morrow. For*  
*what is your life? it is even a vapour, that*  
*appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth*  
*away.* Had the Apostle endeavoured to  
 draw off men's minds from the love and  
 admiration of earthly goods, by only repre-  
 senting their *frailty* and *vanity*, they might  
 have set themselves *thus* to oppose, and elude  
 his argument: What if the things of this  
 world are, in their nature, *frail* and *transi-*  
*tory?* we may nevertheless enjoy them at the  
*present*; and their very *inconstancy*, if they  
 should be *taken away* from us, may occa-  
 sion a *restitution* of them; besides, in all  
 probability, if *some* should be unhappily ta-  
 ken



*ken away, others of those blessings may remain, and well supply the absence of the rest.* SERM. XVII.

But at once to put the matter beyond all dispute, to overthrow the fallacious Sophistry of flesh and blood, to abate, and, if possible, extinguish their inordinate affection for the things of this world, he enquires into the *spring* and *fountain* of all that *can* happen to men, good or ill, the *root* and fundamental *principle* of being, *life* it self, without which, honours, and riches, and pleasures, are all but *empty* names: He addresses to them by way of *question*, whereby he seems to make every one, to whom he writes, a judge of his resolution: As if he had said:

“ Tell me, you that promise great  
 “ advantages to your selves, and form  
 “ designs for many months and years; I  
 “ appeal even to *you*, thus desperately *con-*  
 “ *fidant* men; I do not say, what is your  
 “ *wealth*, that food of moths, and rust,  
 “ and rottenness? or what are your *sensual*  
 “ *pleasures*, which all *perish* with the *using*?  
 “ or what is your *health*, that slave of hun-  
 “ ger and thirst, and triumph of diseases?  
 “ but what is your *life itself*, for which  
 “ you labour, and strive, and heap up  
 “ riches? do but well consider it, and then  
 “ deny it if you can; is it any thing but  
 “ a

SERM. " a mere vapour, a thin body which a gale  
 XVII. " of wind blows quite away, or a little sun-  
 shine utterly dispells, or, if left to itself,  
 " mounts up a while, and is suddenly lost in  
 " air?

*Who* it is amongst the sons of men, that shall next go down into the grave, is known only to God. But indeed, to speak the truth, there is none more likely than that man, whosoever he be, that boasts himself of to-morrow, and rejoiceth in his boastings, Jam. 4. 16. and is most confident that he is out of danger.

When the ground of the rich, voluptuous man, mentioned in the Parable Luke 12. brought forth plentifully, he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room, where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do, I will pull down my barns, and build greater, and there I will bestow all my fruits, and my goods: And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? It was certainly an argument of great foolishness in this person to think, that worldly riches are the goods of the soul; nor was it a point of wisdom, when he wanted more  
 room

room *where* to bestow his goods, to pull SERM.  
down what he had *before*; but it was a XVII.  
*greater* folly to overlook their *transient* con-  
dition, to imagine that the building of  
barns will give sufficient security against  
the accidents of fire, of tempest, and of  
robbers: but *above all*, it was *extreme* folly  
not to consider the *uncertain* tenure upon  
which his goods were held, which was not  
for a term of *years*, nay not the term of  
one single *week*, or *day*; but in the *ensuing*  
*night* his soul is required, and then, though  
it will be difficult to say, *whose* those things  
shall be which he had provided, it will be  
very easy to determine, *whose* they shall  
*not* be, certainly *not his*, who so fondly de-  
pended upon them. For *now the grave is*  
*his house*, and *he makes his bed in darkneſs*.  
Job 17. 13.

How wretchedly *imprudent* therefore, and  
*void of understanding* are they, who flatter  
themselves in their own eyes, and dote upon  
*this false* world, and boast themselves of *to-*  
*morrow*, when they know not, but that  
*every hour* they breathe may become  
their *last*, and *they cease* to have any *fur-*  
*ther* concern in it! And then all their  
thoughts about it will perish with them-  
selves.



SERM. I shall conclude this Discourse with two  
 XVII. practical inferences, which the subject of it  
 suggests to us.

The *first* is, That casting away all confidence in *our selves*, or in *any thing* we have or undertake, we humbly, and with implicit affiance, refer all to the good pleasure of the Almighty, in whose hand are all events, who governs all things as seems best to his unerring wisdom. Agreeable hereto is the direction of St. James, 4. 15. *Ye ought to say, if the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that.* From him we received not only our *powers* of action, and whatsoever we possess or enjoy, but our *being* too, and are *his servants* in the strictest sense which *that* relation can import. Unless therefore we could be set at liberty from being *creatures*, from our very *nature* and *existence*, it is impossible for us to make a plea of an *independent* interest. Wherefore let it be our chief care, as it is most certainly our indispensable duty, and will be our truest interest, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, to place an entire and unreserved trust and confidence in God, and in all our ways religiously acknowledge *him*, and our subordination to *his will*. For *thus saith the Lord; Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the*  
*the*

*the mighty man glory in his might; let not* SERM.  
*the rich man glory in his riches: but let* XVII.  
*him that glorieth, glory in this, that he un-*  
*derstandeth and knoweth me, that I am the*  
*Lord, which exercise lovingkindness, judg-*  
*ment and righteousness in the earth. Jer. 9.*  
 23, 24.

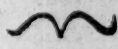
*Secondly,* From hence may be collected the necessity of men's breaking off their sins by *immediate* repentance, and bringing forth fruits meet for it. Repentance is a work of the *highest* importance — a work that may easily be deferred too *long*, but cannot be too *soon* begun, nor too *vigorous-*  
*ly* pursued: They must therefore lay hold on the *present* time, which *only* they can call their *own*, and not suffer it to pass irrecoverably from them, but *to-day*, while it is called *to-day*, forsake their evil ways, and turn to God, lest the *night*, the hour of *death* come, when no man can work, and render Repentance impossible for ever.

*How much* of our time remains behind, we know not; but *this* we all know (and happy will it be for us, if we duly, and to purpose, consider it) that no man is sure that the *morrow*, that this very *night* will not put a period to his being in this world. Nay, suppose our life should be *lengthened* to a week, a month, a *year* or *two*, (and

S E R M. surely many *thousands* will fall before *that*  
 XVII. time) do we think, that we shall *then* be  
 ready to give up our accounts before the  
 throne of God without perplexity and di-  
 straction? Do we think, that we shall  
*then* have *rooted out* every habit of sin, ut-  
 terly *put off* the old man, which is corrupt  
 according to the deceitful lusts, and put on the  
 new man, which after God is created in  
 righteousness and true holiness? Eph. 4. 22,  
 23, 24. This difficult task lieth upon us;  
 and we see, how *uncertain* the time is,  
 which is allotted for the performance of  
 it; and withal, we cannot but *tremble* to  
 think, how very *fatal* the putting it off  
 from day to day may be in its consequence,  
 how extremely *miserable* will be the condi-  
 tion of our souls, when God shall *require*  
 them, and find them heavy laden with the  
 burden of sins presumptuously continued in,  
 and unrepented of, and consign us to the  
 impartial enquiry of *that* solemn Day,  
 which he has irreversibly decreed — when  
*we must all appear before the judgment-seat of*  
*Christ, that every one may receive the things*  
*done in his body, according to that he hath*  
*done, according to the degree, or proportion*  
*of his work, whether it be good, or bad.*  
 2 Cor. 5. 10. 5 JY61

Who so is *wise*, will *ponder* these things,  
 and make no long *tarrying* effectually to *pre-*  
*pare*



*pare* himself, by a serious and unfeigned SERM.  
Repentance and Amendment of Life, for XVII.  
that strict account he must *then* render of   
all his actions, forasmuch as he assuredly  
*knows what that Day will infallibly bring*  
forth.

F I N I S.

